

Transformation in teaching: Listening to Every Voice.

**I was gathering images all of my life, storing them away,
and forgetting them. Somehow I had to send myself back,
with words as catalysts, to open the memories out and see
what they had to offer. (Dandelion Wine, Ray Bradbury,
1975, p. viii)**

Ana Lia Pauchulo

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate

Studies in Education

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Abstract

Action research is a methodology that supports practitioner research. This study is an exploration of one researcher's practice using the living-theory approach to action research. Initially, my focus was to improve my practice by asking how I can facilitate transformative learning experiences with the teachers with whom I work. As part of this search, I examined the contradictions between my espoused and implicit values. In keeping with the evolving nature of my inquiry, I unveiled the telos that constituted the impetus for my search, which began as a tension about the quality of my interactions and ended as a quest to find my voice among the others'. I used personal narratives, journal entries, a videotaping session, interactions with critical friends and interviews with colleagues and administrators to engage in a process of continuing self- and interactive reflection. Throughout my study, I explored how theoretical concepts intertwine with personal experiences. In the final chapter, I share the possible connections between my living educational theory and a more general theory of transformative learning. I conclude my study with a look at the transformation process I underwent as a result of the study and the new questions I formulated as I began the action research spiral again.

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INTRODUCTION

This inquiry originated as a result of my continued concern about the quality of my professional and personal interactions. As I began to put my ideas on paper, I realized that everything involved in this study *is* both my story and those of others whose lives influence mine.

Writing past and current personal narratives caused a concern about my voice and my interactions to surface. Therefore, my study is a reflection on the meanings I have constructed. It is also a quest for the meanings coconstructed with others. These others are my family, my colleagues, my students, and the theorists who entered the same corridors I walk.

My inquiry is the result of whom I have become, although I think about becoming as an evolving concept. Change is implicit in my becoming. My professional interests are rooted in my personal story. I have not created its characters or events. Yet, I realize that I choose what I tell my audience; I decide what memories are important. Manicom (1992) explained that “personal accounts are not raw facts but constructions” and that “personal narratives/stories/descriptions are selective and partial, constructed in particular times for particular audiences” (p. 372).

It is my hope that my inquiry will contribute to a discourse of possibilities in the educational field, a field to which I devote so much of my energy and emotion. Connelly and Clandinin (1994) guide my thinking when they state:

Methods for the study of personal experience are simultaneously focused in four directions: inward and outward, backward and forward. By inward we mean the internal conditions of feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions, and so

on. By outward we mean existential conditions, that is the environment, or what E.M. Bruner (1986) calls reality. By backward and forward we are referring to temporality, past, present, and future. To experience an experience is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways and to ask questions pointing each way. (p. 417)

This quote contains the underlying premises of my study that took me inward to examine what my values are and whether they are reflected in my practice. It took me outward where the others' voices are, so I can hear their realities that intertwine with mine. I embarked on a quest for meaning about the past, about my present, and the future. I looked towards the past to see the origin of my quest, I examined my present to evaluate where I am situated in the world, and I hoped for a future where dialogue, reflection, and courage will dominate the type of teaching I value.

CHAPTER ONE: THE QUESTIONS AND HOW THEY CAME TO BE

**She entered the story knowing she would emerge from it
feeling she had been immersed in the lives of others,
in plots that stretched back twenty years, her body
full of sentences and moments, as if awaking
from sleep with a heaviness caused by unremembered dreams. (The English Patient, Michael Ondaatje, 1992, p. 12)**

This study began as an attempt to answer two questions: *How can I facilitate transformative learning experiences with the teachers with whom I work?* and *How can I live my values in my practice?* Transformation and values sustain my work. I am a Reading Recovery teacher leader with Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. My role is twofold. In my position as a Reading Recovery teacher leader, I am responsible for the training of new Reading Recovery teachers and the continuing professional development of trained Reading Recovery teachers. I work for the Superintendent of Curriculum and the Liaison Administrator, the Principal of Renewal at the Program Department. An important aspect of that role involves working collaboratively with the Principal of Renewal at the Program Department, principals, consultants, and my partners (two other teacher leaders) to sustain and strengthen the Reading Recovery implementation in our system. In addition, this leadership role requires that I teach Reading Recovery students daily in a school setting. As a Reading Recovery teacher at an elementary school in Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, I teach Reading Recovery students and work collaboratively with my

principal and classroom teachers to implement curriculum initiatives in the area of literacy acquisition and improve student learning and classroom practice.

Both roles require a commitment to constant self-reflection. However, it is in my work with teachers that I question my effectiveness. As Schön (1983) explained, “when a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continuing process of self-education...when he functions as a researcher-in-practice, the practice itself is a source of renewal” (p. 299).

The work of a Reading Recovery teacher leader is unique because it involves working with Reading Recovery students, supporting continuing professional development of classroom teachers, and training and supporting continuing professional development of Reading Recovery teachers. Therein lies one reason for my concern about transformative learning. Clay (1987) explains that the implementation of the Reading Recovery program in an education system causes change along four dimensions. These dimensions are:

1. Change in the ways children approach learning (from passive to active). This change is achieved by teachers who support them and encourage them to take risks and problem-solve, through daily, carefully designed interactions,
2. Change in the ways teachers view children and discover ways to support them,
3. Organizational changes in schools, achieved by teachers and administrators, and
4. Change in the way the system sets its priorities.

In this study, I explored the process through which my colleagues and I change our perceptions. Fullan (2001b) writes that “many attempts at change fail because no distinction is made between theories of change (what causes change) and theories of changing (how to influence those causes)” (p. 11). Thus, I looked outward in hope of

discovering the factors that influence or hinder “changing” in the professionals with whom I work. I looked inward to examine how I develop and how to improve my practice in order to facilitate that shift at the teacher level.

CONJECTURES AND NEW DISCOVERY

I have tried to find words that might help teachers to help more children climb higher mountains...but words that help teaching are hard to find.

(Clay, 2001, p. 6)

I sought both self-education and renewal as I began this journey. Renewal is essential because reaching a state of constant certainty would mean that I have stopped searching. As Sirotnik (1999) points out, “renewal is not about a point in time; it is about all points in time - it is about continuous, critical inquiry into current practices and principled innovation that might improve education” (p. 608).

I came to my inquiry with some previous conjectures. It was my belief that both the Reading Recovery training model and the teamwork that Reading Recovery teachers do with classroom teachers could provide vehicles for transformative learning. My own training as a Reading Recovery teacher leader and my work with teachers in training allow me to assert that during their training Reading Recovery teachers become aware of their assumptions about how children learn and whether they can learn. This process takes a great deal of self- and group reflection and is unsettling and overwhelming. The dissonance created by the apprenticeship format causes trainees to examine their biases about their own learning style and theories of how children learn. The topics teachers raise throughout the training year seem to reveal that a shift in their understandings about early literacy

acquisition has taken place. These shifts are essential for successful teaching. Clay (1982) describes this professional growth. She writes that

topics raised by the teachers in these discussions suggested that their attention to the reading process was shifting from teaching for items of knowledge (letters known, words remembered), and from getting the child to habituate a skill or memorize a new element, to developing in the child the confidence and willingness to use a variety of strategies. Another feature of the shift in teaching was movement away from having the poor reader dependent on the teacher and towards teaching in such a way that the children had many opportunities to teach themselves. (pp. 198-199)

My twofold position as a Reading Recovery teacher leader requires that I work with teachers in two different roles. My role as a teacher leader is to facilitate, probe, elicit, encourage, challenge, and provide feedback to the trainees in an unthreatening environment in order to see that shift arise. I am also interested in the emotional shifts-the ones that have to do with the affect.

When I work with classroom teachers in my role as a teacher of children, a similar process seems to develop. As soon as my students show signs of change in the way they process text, I share with their teachers. My intention is explicit. I invite the teacher to start expecting the same type of response in the classroom. Again, this is a process whereby the classroom teacher engages in a reflection process through which she/he revises prior assumptions about the child in question and tries to interact with her/him in a way that will enable an independent and more able response.

This brief description reminds me of Mezirow's theory of transformative learning, which the author defines as "the process of learning through critical self-reflection, which

results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience" (1990 b, p. xvi).

Mezirow continues by explaining that "learning includes acting on these insights" (p. xvi).

In my view, an interesting aspect of Mezirow's theory of transformative learning is the importance of group participation. He explains that "transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action based on the resulting insight"

(Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). According to Mezirow, discourse is "the process in which we have an active dialogue with others to better understand the meaning of an experience" (p. 14).

There lies another reason for my first question: I was interested in finding out whether my interactions with the teachers with whom I work help facilitate a change in their professional meaning perspectives and my own.

As Mezirow explains: "Transformative learning results in new or transformed meaning schemes, or when reflection focuses on premises, new or transformed meaning perspectives –that is, perspective transformation" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 108). In my view, the concept of perspective transformation refers to the shift in understandings that Reading Recovery and classroom teachers undergo. The major transformation occurs when a teacher who is used to working with groups of children is forced to concentrate on an individual child. Clay (1982) discovered that it is easy to arrive at false assumptions about a process as complex as learning to read and write. In her words,

it is possible to average a vast amount of evidence in order to make a program decision. A teacher who works with groups may be forced to take a compromise path to deliver a lesson. Thus, due to time constraints, a teacher working with a group

may arrive at surface level conclusions about what children are doing. Teachers are less likely to make these averaging judgments when they work along side individual children. (p. xi)

Here I am putting forth some of the conclusions at which I arrived when I initially studied the theory of transformative learning. My readings on adult teaching and learning provided a theoretical perspective that moved my initial inquiry forward because I saw my practice and my life reflected in the concepts I read. Mezirow (1990a) says:

Much of what we learn involves making new interpretations that enable us to elaborate, further differentiate, and reinforce our long-established frames of reference or to create new meaning schemes. Perhaps even more central to adult learning than elaborating established meaning schemes is the process of reflecting back on prior learning to determine whether what we have learned is justified under present circumstances. (p. 5)

In my study, I use my narratives, my journal entries, and my conversations to reflect back on prior experiences. My interest seems to fit Mezirow's (2000) proposition. Mezirow's description of three types of adult learning motivated me to begin the exploration as well, as they also seem to resemble my practice. He says:

Habermas (1984) has helped us understand that there are two major domains of learning with different purposes, logics of inquiry, criteria of rationality, and modes of validating beliefs. One is *instrumental learning* – learning to control and manipulate the environment or other people, as in task-oriented problem solving to improve performance. The other is *communicative learning* – learning what others mean when they communicate with you. (2000, p. 8)

When I began exploring this topic, my initial stand was that the shifts my colleagues and I experience can be observed in the very process of learning and interacting. They take place through observation and action while teaching individual children (instrumental learning), and group interaction during Reading Recovery sessions and team meetings (communicative learning). Mezirow continues by saying: “Although Habermas suggests a third learning domain, emancipation, Transformation Theory redefines this as the transformation process that pertains in both instrumental and communicative learning domains” (p. 10). I seem to see this transformation process develop when, as a teacher, I discover that changes have occurred in my perceptions of a child, my teaching, and myself. I have seen examples of this process in my colleagues as well.

In describing my work, I have attempted to provide the professional reason for my first question. My second question for study was *How can I live my values in my practice?* This brings me to the type of research in which I immersed myself, which is one type of action research. Although I will share my understanding of the methodology of this study in Chapter Three, I clarify now the theoretical reason for this question. The type of action research I chose is defined as a “living theory approach.” It encourages the practitioner to examine the value base of her/his work, whether those values are lived in it, and the contradictions that arise when her/his values are not reflected in practice. The significance of this approach resides, in my view, in the fact that it forces the researcher to turn the question around. Rather than looking at how to improve others, or a particular teaching method, I look at improving, questioning, and examining the self.

This process began with my Master of Education studies. As I began those studies, guided by Drake’s (1997) position that “who we are may be the most important thing that

we teach” (p. 46), I discovered that I had implicit understandings about my teaching that were conceived through the course of my life. The author refers to the work teachers do with their students, but it applies to teachers working with teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study included a look inward, into my values. This notion is central in Whitehead’s educational research methodology. Whitehead (2000) explains that such methodology is based on “action reflection spirals of the form:

I experience a concern when my values are negated in my practice

I imagine a way forward

I act

I evaluate

I modify my concerns, ideas and actions in the light of my evaluations” (p. 93).

Are my values evidenced in my practice? Furthermore, what are my values? As I try to answer these questions, I continue into the second part of this chapter.

Caring and Hope: My Values and My Story

Narrative, self-study, and action research of the living-theory type are overlapping concepts in this study. My recollections of childhood memories assist me in identifying the values that drive my work as a teacher. In other words, the narrative *is* the research; the reason for the question is *in* the story. One of the most enlightening aspects of my Master’s studies has been to realize that some of the theory I read reflects my life. My “micro theory” (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 10) relates to the more abstract theory found in academic papers. I have learned to “situate professional inquiry in the context of personal histories” (p. 15).

When I reminisce, I pinpoint the values that help me develop my living educational theory. I often wonder what pushes me to work relentlessly with children who find learning difficult. There is a childhood story that resurfaces from time to time and makes me think of it as the starting point for this “caring.” Van Manen (1990) too studied the value of anecdotal narrative. This author pointed out that “what is often not seen is that anecdotal narrative as story form is an effective way of dealing with certain kinds of knowledge” (p. 120).

Two Girls

It was 1962 and I was in Grade 4. My family lived in a nice, middle-class neighbourhood. However, in what was one of the contrasts of my life in Argentina, just a couple of blocks away from my school there was a group of very poor houses. One of my classmates was from that *villa miseria* or slum. Although I was not aware of it at the time, she was considered “different.” Her skin was darker, and the fact that she came from that small slum made her *one of them*. I liked that girl, so I helped her at school and played with her. One day, while waiting for me after school, my mother noticed that I was the only child walking out with this girl, as a friend. She was amazed at my independence and ignorance of the prejudice that the other children already knew too well. I seem to remember how I felt as my mother talked about this at the dinner table. On the one hand, I felt recognized by my mother. I also noticed a complete acceptance and agreement on my father’s part. They were proud of me for this. On the other hand, I felt unsettled and sad. That day marked the

affirmation of a model approved by my parents and the end of safe denial of what was going on in my environment. (Narrative, September 2000)

On that day, I became aware that discrimination lived next door and that when prejudicial behaviour happened at school, it could impede learning. As I reflect back on this story, I sense that my classmates did not exercise compassion and empathy. Little did I know then that I would be revisiting this type of story many times. This anecdote grew from a particular incident into an example of a more general personal story. The next chapter of this story may reveal when and how I denied and came back to living out my value of caring.

Years went by. I grew up and became a teacher. My first job was at one of those *villa miserias*. It was a very hard time in my life. I tried to cope with the realities of my students and failed many times. My salary was so meager I hardly managed to pay for the materials I wanted my students to have. I was not able to eat my lunch with them because they had not had breakfast and had not brought lunch to school either. Often, my principal and I would go to the children's houses to ask why they were not at school only to find out they were living in miserable conditions. The Military ruled the country those days, making me feel unsafe and not able to care for others, as my own reality was so tenuous.

I abandoned the idea of being a teacher after 4 years. I continued my university studies, became a lawyer, and started my own family. All my empathy and compassion were devoted to raising my own children. I continued to care through them. (Narrative, September 2000)

Noddings (1984) talks about “caring from the inside” (p. 14). Did I stop caring for those children who lived in such poverty? Noddings said,

When I look at and think about how I am when I care, I realize that there is invariably this displacement of interest from my own reality to the reality of the other.... But I am suggesting that we do not see only the direct possibilities for becoming better than we are when we struggle toward the reality of the other. We also have aroused in us the feeling; “I must do something”. (p. 14)

So, what happened to me when I stopped trying to do something for those children? Noddings also talks about the “caring for the ethical self” (1984, p. 14) as a knowledge of what gives pain and pleasure. According to Noddings, caring for oneself precedes the caring for others. Someone who does not care for him/herself could not care for others. I have come to believe that, in those years, caring for my own children and my well-being were necessary passages that would help me grow and, in turn, go back to the sense of caring for others. As Noddings says so beautifully: “Whatever roles I assume in life, I may be described in constant terms as one-caring” (p. 17).

Where did this being the “one-caring” lead me? What is the meaning of my caring? Van Manen (1990) studied the purpose of phenomenological reflection. According to him, it is “to try to grasp the essential meaning of something” (p. 77). As he explained, “the meaning or essence of a phenomenon is never simple or one dimensional. Meaning is multi-dimensional and multi-layered.... Reflecting on lived experience then becomes reflectively analyzing the structural or thematic aspects of that experience” (p. 78). As I retell this story, I rediscover the impetus for the two questions in my study. My quest is as much a need to

make sense of my practice and my personal story as it is to discover whether I show my caring in it.

When I talk about hope, I think about educational hope. This value is also in my story. In 1988, I moved to Canada and became a teacher. My path took me back to where I had started. I teach reading and writing to grade 1 students who are at risk in their literacy learning. Clay (1992) explains that “perceptual, motor, cognitive, language, affective and cultural factors contribute to literacy learning” (p. 72) and that children who fall behind in that learning may be at risk because of deficient responding in one or more of those areas. However, Clay asserts that “Reading Recovery does not look at causes of difficulty in the children: it starts from a different position. It assumes that we can approach literacy learning differently for these low achievers, changing the parameters of how instruction is delivered” (p. 71). This is no simple enterprise. Sometimes, I miss being a classroom teacher and doing art, singing a song, or working with the whole range of children. However, I know this is a good place for me. I have no difficulty putting myself in those children's shoes. I want to help them and understand where they are coming from. I realize how hard it is to help my students to move from a passive to an active attitude towards learning. It takes so much energy to convince them that taking risks is a safe enterprise and that mistakes serve us as vehicles for learning. Equally difficult is to convince some colleagues that these children can learn. Again, the prejudice to which I was blind when I was a little girl and that now I want to ignore stubbornly creeps into my story. In trying to dialogue with teachers about those prejudices and “expectations” that these children will not succeed, I often use the word “hope.” I find myself saying, “I refuse to give up hope for these kids.” I never connected

this to any theory of education until I read Van Manen. He explored the meaning of pedagogic hope as opposed to other kinds of hope. As he said:

What are we to make of the language of teaching that is thus made available to teachers? Herein lies the irony of a profound contradiction: the language by way of which teachers are encouraged to interpret themselves and reflect on their living with children is thoroughly imbued by hope, and yet it is almost exclusively a language of doing - it lacks being. We do not know how to talk of our being with children as a being present with hope for these children. The language of objectives, aims, teacher expectations, intended learning outcomes, goals, or ends in view is a language of hope out of which hope itself has been systematically purged. (p. 122)

Before beginning my study, I had grown tired of defending the *impossible*. Johnny will never read and write properly because his older brother does not. Mary will never be literate because she comes from a deprived home. The list of impediments can be quite long. However, I respond, I have a Johnny and a Mary who did become literate despite those apparent disadvantages. I have seen it many times. Often, many teachers become *impassioned* after they see the results on their Johnny or Mary. How does a teacher who entered the profession with a sense that she could teach every child become someone who does not see the potential in *a* child? Do I have any possibility to interact with my colleagues in a way that restores hope in both of us? As Van Manen (1990) explained:

The language of aims and objectives...is a language of hopeless hope. It is an impatient language that neither bears nor truly awakens. How does "having measurable objectives" differ from "having hope"? Teacher expectations and anticipations associated with certain aims and objectives differ from having hope for

our children in that expectations and anticipations easily degenerate into desires, wants, certainties, prediction. As teachers we tend to close ourselves off from possibilities that lie outside the direct or indirect field of vision of the expectations. (pp. 122-123)

The reading of this passage reveals another layer of the childhood story I related before. One of the reasons why I saw that child as a worthy other with whom I could relate was that I did not have any of the “expectations” society had already imposed based on her social status. On the other hand, when I left teaching in Argentina, I stopped seeing the possibilities, lost hope, and became unable to care for those children. In my teaching today, I have recovered that hope. I feel fortunate as I read Van Manen’s words: “to hope is to believe in possibilities. Therefore hope strengthens and builds” (1990, p. 123).

Hope strengthens and, ironically, a great deal of strength, courage, and persistence are necessary to live out that value. As I learned 2 years ago, after my father’s death, my childhood story may have been a replica of another family story as well as a precedent of my present story. After my father passed away, I resorted to writing as a way of honouring his life and keeping his memory alive. Van Manen said that

writing gives appearance and body to thought. And as it does, we disembody what in another sense was already embodied. However, not until we had written this down did we quite know what we know. Writing separates the knower from the known...but it also allows us to reclaim this knowledge and make it our own in a new and more intimate manner. Writing constantly seeks to make external what somehow is internal. We come to know what we know in this dialectic process of constructing a text... and thus learning what we are capable of saying. (p. 127)

I wanted to write about my father's life. I asked my aunt, my father's sister, to tell me stories about their childhood. She told me a story about my father in elementary school in Argentina. When I wrote that story, I came to know my origins and my present better.

My grandparents arrived in Argentina with their three small children and did not speak Spanish. My aunt, the oldest, was in charge of helping my father with homework. He liked being part of the plays and concerts that the school had every term. Unfortunately, he was asked to play a part in almost every performance and his grades were suffering. His teacher told my aunt to inform their mother that my father's promotion was at risk. So, my aunt, although young and a bit frightened, knowing that her parents would not be able to respond, explained to the teacher what was happening. Assuming the role of the advocate, she asked the teacher to avoid inviting my father to be part of any artistic activity until his grades improved. The teacher honoured my aunt's request and my father began to do better. (Narrative, October 2000)

This story would not have any significance except for the fact that I live this kind of situation daily. Many of my students' parents do not speak English. It is very common for me to speak to older siblings and ask them to listen to their brother or sister read every night. I often report to them and ask that they relate the news to their parents. When my aunt told me this family story I was amazed at how fate had brought me full circle, to where my father had begun 60 years ago. Naturally, I knew that I was the first generation Argentinean in my family. My father did not talk much about his beginnings. Perhaps those stories are buried in the archives of memory because immigrants feel ashamed of them. My aunt's story put me in touch with my origins. I am an immigrant, as are many of the families with whom I come

in contact. Perhaps I care so much and I have that persistent hope in their ability because of my father. Did he have caring teachers who valued him for his artistic talent? Did some of them judge him because his parents did not speak Spanish? Nevertheless, my father was an achiever. He continued his studies and became a designer. I have one of his watercolours over my fireplace. When I look at it, I see a symbol of perseverance and courage. He was fortunate to have an articulate older sister who cared and believed in him. I ask myself, what about the ones who did not have that support? Perhaps, part of my hopefulness is filled with the need to give opportunities to the few children who come my way and are not as fortunate as my father was.

Moral Leadership

Leadership and how I exercise it offers another lens through which I look at my values. Aspects of leadership that I seem to identify in my past and current stories are the pursuit of the value of caring by helping *one* child. As Sergiovanni (1992) explained: “A leader is someone who makes decisions based on values and not self-interest” (p. 125). Perhaps I abandoned the value of caring for others in the past, when I resigned my teaching position in Argentina. The question still remains today: Do I have the perseverance and courage to let my hope and caring carry my leading and teaching? I will further examine whether I live out these values in my practice in Chapter Two.

Sergiovanni explains that when the leader serves her values and others, it does not matter who is providing the leadership. And “it matters less whether the style of leadership is directive or not, involves others or not...what matter are issues of substance” (1992, p. 129). He distinguishes between issues of process such as styles of leadership and issues of

substance by asking essential questions such as “What are we about? Are students being served? What are our obligations to this community? With these questions in mind, how can we best get the job done?” (p. 129). These questions can be approached as questions about values. Thus, I continue to ask myself: What are my values and how do I live them or negate them?

As I close this chapter, I am left with the conviction that when a researcher introduces the question of values in her inquiry she places authenticity at the core of it. Caring, hope, and values-based leadership constitute the umbrella under which my reflection rests. Transformative learning and change are grounded in the values of inquiry and knowledge. My profound interest in early literacy acquisition is embedded in the value of social justice. My past stories are examples of those themes. My current story is a *coming back* to those values that may have been abandoned at one point in my life. Surrounding voices aided me in answering my first question: How can I facilitate transformative learning with the teachers with whom I work?

Just as Shields (1997) asserts, my inquiry “rests on the belief that we embody our experience and bring it to bear on new situations as they arise in our lives,” and I too “acknowledge a willingness to see anew” (p. 12). In future chapters I share how I revised my questions as I unveiled my assumptions and opened my eyes to my surroundings.

CHAPTER TWO: A TELOS AND THE VALUES EMERGE FROM THE STORY

I am using story in the sense of Connelly & Clandinin (1999) as a way of shaping a professional's identity and as a way of contributing to the professional knowledge landscape. (Jack Whitehead, 2000, p. 91)

In this chapter, I follow the thinking of many authors. However, Whitehead's notion of "I as a living contradiction" (2000, p. 93) is the generating force of my study. My two questions refer to the same idea: How do I improve my practice and how do I live my values in it are related, because I improve my practice when I live my values. The problem here is that "I" as a living contradiction, in Whitehead's terms, experience "holding together two mutually exclusive opposite values" (p. 93). On the one hand, I proclaim that I hold certain values; on the other, I act in a way that negates them.

McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead (1997) describe values as "those qualities which provide meaning and purpose in your life and which also provide the explanatory principles for why you make the judgments you do" (p. 129). Applied to the teaching profession, this means that our values are reflected in what we do in our classrooms. I have alluded to the values I espouse: caring, hope, inquiry, moral leadership, and social justice. Drake's metaphor of the "journey of the learner" (1991, p. 49) motivates me a great deal because that is how I view teaching and learning. As Drake stated, "this journey assumes that learning is a lifelong process toward the actualization of human potential and that the teacher is also a learner" (p. 49). Drake used the stories of ancient times and explained that they can offer examples of how to live our lives to the fullest. She writes that "embedded in

the journey story is a problem-solving strategy which can act as a guide for women undergoing transformation” (1992 a, p. 51).

The plot Drake identifies in mythologies across cultures starts with a call to adventure; at that point the female hero separates from the familiar. She then enters new territory where she will meet the demons and dragons. The dragon is defeated and the female hero receives a reward. Through this journey, the female hero has acquired new knowledge that she shares, once back in her kingdom. I find this description quite beautiful. At the beginning of the journey there is a loss of identity that is regained at the end. In synthesis, Whitehead’s concept of I as a living contradiction, McNiff’s definition of values, and Drake’s concept of the female hero’s journey guide me in this chapter.

My move to Canada and my father’s death are two episodes in my life that sent me on a journey I parallel to Drake’s. I have reconstructed these events and extracted from them the origin of my quest.

Two Journeys on One Flight

My life is filled with contrast. I grew up in a house where long silences were interrupted by brief moments of dialogue. I am the product of the sixties, in Argentina, a country where dictatorships were interrupted by brief moments of democracy. In the seventies, while young people were protesting the Vietnam War in North America, we were trying to avoid being caught without identification if stopped by the police or the military, for the consequences would have been deadly. My present is made of an adopted Canadian culture that does not attempt to silence the echoes from another land.

I see my reality through two lenses. Although I am telling my personal story, I know that it is embedded in a social context. Despite the ambivalence of my upbringing, both in the social and personal contexts, I have the fondest childhood memories. Many of those memories have to do with books and other written messages.

Only 8 years ago, something happened to which I did not pay enough attention at the time. My parents came to Canada in the summer of 1994 on what would be my father's last visit. As soon as they arrived, my father opened his briefcase and handed me some of my favourite childhood books and my grandmother's old missals. In them, she had kept little religious cards. On the backs of those cards there are names, dates, and testimonies of my family's past. The childhood books he brought were torn and worn out. I had reread them so many times! Although I was very excited to see those books, my only reaction was to show them to my daughters and tell them I would read the stories with them. I did not assign a deeper significance to what my father had done.

I guess I didn't feel the need to do so, at the time.

My father died two years ago. I flew to Argentina the day after his death and spent 10 days there at my parents' house. I slept in my old room, in my old bed. I tried to come to grips with many things on that trip. My father's absence felt real and unattainable at the same time. I tried to help my sister with burial and legal arrangements. I tried to spend some time with my mother, but it was very hard and painful because she did not seem to want to talk about my father. One hot afternoon, my sister and I were looking through old photographs, sitting on the cool marble floor of my parents' living room. There is a bookshelf in that room. It houses books

that evoke memories of many cherished stories. In one of its drawers, my sister discovered a pile of old photographs and papers. We started looking through everything and noticed that my father had written on them: the event, the date, and a comment. There was an envelope; in it a dried orchid. My father had noted, “mom had this orchid on her dress, the day we got married,” and the date again. Of course, then came the books. Again, dad had written on the first page the date when he started reading the book, when he reread it, and an opinion about it. My sister and I kept looking at each other, attempting to understand what were the real messages my father had written. Later, we went to his office. Once again, we found little messages on every desk, on piles of papers, blueprints and books, with instructions about what to do with everything. My sister looked at me and said, “do you realize what this all means?” I was not sure....

I had an opportunity to think about many things, at length, during the 12-hour flight back to Canada. A crowd of images, smells, and voices kept me company on the plane. I could not put them to rest. My father’s “messages” became an intriguing quest for meaning. Was there a deeper meaning? On the other hand, were my sister and I reading too much into them? People do write the date when a photo was taken. The note “my daughter gave me this book for Christmas, just before she left for Canada,” on the front page of a book may sound superfluous to most people. Is my search less valid if it is just my interpretation? Why did I persevere in trying to extract meaning from his actions?

Amidst the contrast to which I alluded before, I often find myself struggling to bring coherence into my life. On that flight, I tried to rescue my relationship with my

father, after his death. I had always felt that my parents had not fostered dialogue and was very comfortable with that interpretation. I had spent a good portion of my adult life trying to *repair* that void by making sure that I had the warmest and most fluid communication with my daughters and my students. Unfortunately, I had not spent any time trying to do that with my father. So, there I was, flying from an abrasive summer to a cold winter, trying to come to terms with two losses: my father was gone and with him the possibility of telling him how much I loved him.

Before my father's death, I had created a picture of my adult self as someone who was able to communicate and dialogue. Now, the self-image I had assembled was getting blurry. Death had just shown me how that presumed ability was limited to certain people and circumstances. Perhaps, during that flight, I was not only trying to rescue my relationship with my father.

The plane took off and the "real" flight began. I remembered the books my father brought me when he came to Canada. I interpreted that those books meant that he, often absent and absorbed with work, had taken note of my love of books. He had observed me and remembered. My grandmother's missals were a way of telling me that I have a connection to him through his mother. He knew he had cancer at the time. We learned about that only 4 years later. Once again, no words, just symbols are left for me to *hear* what my father wanted to tell me.

My father's messages on books and photos were another useful symbol. According to my mother, he had written some of those messages during the last days of his life. What was that all about? Driven by this need to understand, I thought that the notes found at his house must have been my father's way of saying, "I know I am

dying, but it doesn't matter. I had a good life. I want you to remember it." Many regrets plagued my thinking. My father and I had not talked about his imminent death. I often hear stories from friends who tell me that they had intimate conversations with their dying parents that allowed them to say goodbye and how much they were loved. I did not have that, so I was determined to hang onto my reasoning.

What was the hidden message in the notes he left in his office? My father's work was his life. That office is a symbol of perseverance, hope, and determination. He was so proud of his designs and his buildings. I had spent many hours there, working for him when I was a teenager. I stopped going when I started university, then went back, as a rookie lawyer, a couple of days a week, in one of my attempts at starting a practice. My husband had also worked with my father as an architect in that office.

At dinnertime, the flight attendant brought me back to the present. I realized that I was on two flights. The real one was taking me back to Canada. The other one was a fast flight to the past. A strong force was pulling me in two directions, but I continued. My thoughts went back to my father's office and, for the first time on this flight, to my mother. She came to my father's office with my sister and me the first day we went to see what we needed to do there. She sat on a chair and quietly stared at the photos on the wall. My father had taken a photo of every house he built. A photo of our own family house was on that wall. After a few minutes, she started to cry quietly. When I asked her to tell me what she was thinking, she provided another example of our family tradition of no dialogue and said only "oh, nothing...it's all

those years.” I valued those few words and the brief tears. I interpreted that as her acknowledgement of my father’s passing and his life’s work.

My dream-like reminiscence took me to my childhood memories. Growing up in my parents’ home, in the absence of words, I became quite good at interpreting what looks and gestures meant. Often, I tried to be the one who explained what the other desired. Early in my life, I assumed the roles of *interpreter* and *moderator* in my family. Perhaps that is why I grew up hearing that I would make a good lawyer. So, I went on to fulfill that mandate. However, in an act of rebellion, I also managed to become a teacher. There was a tension there. Was I going to be a lawyer or a teacher? I managed to work as a teacher for 4 years, from 1973 to 1977, while taking my law courses at night. In 1977, I quit teaching and became a lawyer in 1978. I never stopped missing teaching, though. When I became a parent, and my children started school, I would discuss early literacy issues with the school principal and he would recommend readings to me. I spent more time reading material about early literacy acquisition theory than law books. “This contradiction was resolved when I moved to Canada,” I thought.

I quickly went back to the past though. In my role of interpreter and moderator, I wasn’t so good at telling my family what I wanted. This has been and still is a struggle of mine. It is easy for me to speak up for others, but it is difficult to do it for myself.

That thought made me realize that my father’s death had awakened many memories that I thought I had put to rest years before. On that flight, every recollection felt new and raw. On the flight back to Canada, I kept going from the

past to the present in a disorderly way. At some point, my contemplation took me back to his office. Aside from more notes on books leaving traces of his passion for design, he had left some instructions. I interpreted that those instructions made me an adult in my father's eyes. I was no longer the teenager or rookie lawyer trying to look competent. I was now in charge of his affairs. He could not bring himself to sell that office while he was alive. I once suggested that and hurt his feelings. But, the last time he went to his office, before he became too ill to leave the house, he left instructions for us to finish what he could not do in life. I thought that, maybe, they symbolized a vote of confidence in my sister and me. Perhaps he was forgiving me for expecting him to part with his beloved place of work.

Twelve hours went by. I was getting close to Pearson Airport. My husband would be waiting for me. I knew I had to change into my winter clothes. I put my headphones on and searched for a radio station that would play classical music. What a pleasure I felt when I heard the familiar voice of the announcer on 96.3, my favourite station. I thought of my work and my travelling to school every day while listening to the music on that station. The announcer's voice made me feel at home. Thinking about my husband waiting for me made me feel safe. My life in Canada was about to become reality again.

I realized that Canada is home now, although my childhood memories do not connect me to this place. When people around me talk about their pasts, I do not share in the conversation. I listen and think about how different or, sometimes, how similar my recollections are. My daily life is an ever-changing and contrasting landscape. Still submerged in a whirlpool of images, I got ready for landing.

The end of the flight marked the beginning of my grieving process. The following September I started my Master of Education courses at Brock University. Little did I know that beginning my Master's courses would provide me with a unique opportunity to tell my stories. Bringing back the memories, interpreting the *messages*, has allowed me to reconcile my past and my present. I am now on a path. As I walk it, I see why I teach. I begin to understand why I have this relentless hope that learning to read and write will empower the children I teach. I also see shortcomings and weaknesses. Maybe that is what this journey is all about: seeing the whole picture and coming to terms with my different selves. Possibly, that was what my father did on the last days of his life. (Narrative, February 2002)

As I reread this narrative, I see a tapestry made of interwoven personal and professional memories. I see that I wrote a little bit about the social context of my past story, a little about my family, and a bit about my personal story. Conle (2000) explains that “although my inquiry came about through personal stories, my narratives reached out to social, historical and philosophical contexts to gain a wider significance, academically and personally” (p. 189). I could not resist the temptation to unveil some of the questions and additional narratives that my memories triggered. Conle explains that the use of narrative in educational research differs from its use in other disciplines because of “the way the writing or telling of personal experiential narratives in and of itself puts in motion a particular mode of inquiry” (p. 190). I must agree. As I wrote this story, I began to ask myself new questions: Where is my voice? I have a voice for others; can I develop a voice for myself? While it is true that my inquiry has developed as a result of a personal “tension” (p. 190), and writing a story can be therapeutic, it is the tension that provides the “impetus for

inquiry” (Conle, p. 190). I concur with Conle when she advocates intertwining the emotional with the intellectual. My teaching has both components, why not my research?

Conle explains about her writing: “These experiential stories were both objects and means of inquiry for me. I wrote them down because I wanted to write about them” (2000, p. 197). As I wrote my story, I asked myself questions. The answers led me to another question. I set off thinking that this story was about my relationship with my father. As I recounted it, I began to dig into my own self. I thought that my father’s books and messages explain, partly, why I am a teacher. Conle talks about a *telos* as a resolution to a tension. Envisioning this *telos* can guide the purpose of one’s inquiry. The author also realizes that “as a work proceeds, the narrator can try to name a *telos* that she thinks is driving her work, but that does not mean that she really knows this *telos*” (p. 198). That is exactly what happened to me as I pursued my narrative effort. I began to see a piece of the thread, but I was not able, yet, to see its end. For example, when I reread my story, I saw concepts that jumped out at me. The words were *dialogue*, *communication*, and *interpretation*. When that happened, I envisioned a moment when I would reword my questions and my narrative would lead me to new answers. Conle talks about “certain connecting principles among the many stories”(p. 202). The author defines these patterns or connections as *resonance*, and explains how she saw parts of one of her stories “connected to parts of another story through metaphor, not metaphor as a figure of speech, but as a process of understanding” (p. 202). So, my metaphors became the books and the written messages, which replaced my dialogue with my father, my mother, and my sister. Every secondary story that seemed to emerge out of this one took me in the same direction.

As I continued my study, I realized that whether a potential story emerged out of my personal or my professional life, it always revealed one core: the ability to communicate, reflect, and establish dialogue. It seemed as though this was the motivating tension of which Conle talks when describing her inquiry process. The love of literature as the way to achieve that communication and knowledge is another emotional tension I see emerging in my story. Conle writes that as she shared her narrative with others, “a telos came into view and the possible goal and purpose of my inquiry started to become explicit” (p. 190). As I shared my drafts with my professors I experienced that change in a telos that seemed to evolve before my eyes. At the same time, my own change seemed to take shape as I looked for new words to tell my story.

What is the tone of my narrative? Is my story one of optimism and hope or is it a pessimistic story? Well, my father’s death devastated me and, to this day, it saddens me to think about him. The fact that I did not have the chance to tell him that I loved him is not a comforting thought. However, hope and caring are the underlying values the reader can extract out of my story. My father modeled that for me with his actions, without words. McAdams (1993) says that “the infant emerges from the first two years of life with an unconscious, pervasive, and ‘enduring belief’ concerning the extent to which wishes, intentions, desires, and dreams are ‘attainable’ (p. 48).” I know I learned from my father that I must never give up.

Finally, McAdams explains that narrative tone “speaks to the author’s underlying faith in the possibilities of human intention and behaviour” (1993, p. 49). I am determined to believe that my father did reach out to me and let me know with his messages and behaviours that he loved me, that there were no regrets. I think I am a hopeful person

because I try to keep the positive and minimize the negative. However, there are conflicting images in my story, especially the untold story. McAdams calls the “characters that dominate our life stories” (p. 122) imagoes. I interpret McAdams’s imagoes as a tool for the narrator who tries to find coherence in a contradictory identity. Therefore, I, the narrator, create an idealized image of my self. As I study McAdams’s classification of imago types, I see that my ideal self is a teacher/counselor, a caregiver, a traveler, and a maker. There is some truth in those archetypes. Obviously I am a teacher and a caregiver. I traveled to make a new life in Canada. My selves are contained in the story I just wrote. I can see the common thread and some of the contradictions too. As I revisit my stories, I discover more about who I am.

My story is the stepping stone on the incomplete path of this inquiry. McAdams (1993) points out that while life stories must be coherent, that is not enough. The author affirms: “a good life story is one that tolerates ambiguity. Such a story propels the person into the future by holding open a number of different alternatives for future action and thought” (p. 111). I am accustomed to this openness and embrace it.

I have delineated aspects of my identity that reveal to me the values of hope, caring, inquiry, knowledge, and social justice. I have identified the telos I define as a search for meaning in my interactions. Is all this enough? Fullan (1999) writes that “too often in education even the most exciting possibilities have fallen flat, leading to greater demoralization and cynicism. Even great ideas need hard work to be realized” (p. 83). He quotes Cohen (1998) who says that

reformers need ‘unrealistic’ hope as much as teachers do, but such vision alone can enable them to ignore the difficult work in which hope would be given legs and

direction, in which hope could be informed by systematic learning and thus be given means to sustain itself and improve through the inevitable frustrations and failure....One distinguishing feature of more exemplary teachers is that they not only hope but also devise the strategies, make or adapt the curriculum, consider classroom tactics, learn from students' work and their own and in other ways create the intellectual and social infrastructure that enables their students to capitalize both on the visions that inspire their practice and on the hope that sustains it and that enables them to learn from their work. (Cohen, 1998, p. 445, as cited by Fullan, p. 83)

The system I created to "enable [me] to go to scale in giving hope legs" (p. 83) was my inquiry. My values of social justice and moral leadership relate to my work in the area of early literacy acquisition. I have told some childhood stories that might explain my disdain for discrimination and my conviction that literacy can be an empowering tool. However, while I began to live those values in my practice as I worked with disadvantaged children in Argentina, I did not persist in that pursuit. Are those values evidenced in my current story? Here are some stories of my work as an educator in Canada.

Evangeline is a Smart Girl

One morning, I went to pick up Evangeline for her Reading Recovery lesson. She is a middle-class girl, white, and pretty. She is pleasant, polite, and a very articulate little girl who is a native speaker of the English language. When I arrived at her classroom, a supply teacher greeted me and, when told that Evangeline was going to be working with me, said, "That's so strange. She is so smart." My heart sank. I quickly muttered a response, predicting though, that it would not change this

person at all. I said, “having literacy difficulties has nothing to do with intelligence.” Obviously, it troubled me that this teacher associated one with the other. However, the most troublesome thought was, how had she been able to determine that Evangeline was smart? It was 9:00 a.m. and it was her first day in that classroom. I was almost afraid to give myself an answer. Is it possible that this teacher viewed Evangeline that way because she is white, a native speaker of the language, and pretty? (Narrative, October 2000)

I feel quite frustrated when I recall this story. On the one hand, I do not think I was vocal enough. Should I have bluntly asked, “what do you mean?” to this person, or was it a better idea to give her my more neutral response? To this day I do not have an answer to this question. Nevertheless, my intuition tells me that this is a story of discrimination. Maybe Evangeline is one of the lucky ones, but what about the ones who do not look like her? Thayer-Bacon and Thayer-Bacon (1998) write that

critical thinking is used when doubts, concerns, and problems arise, reasons need to be sought, and possible solutions need to be sought. As soon as a person needs to do this kind of thinking, subjective qualities such as emotional feelings come into play. This is because the person has to make judgments and decisions, choosing which facts to attend to and which ones to leave out. The person has to rely on caring. (p. 145)

My intuition tells me this story is a reflection of a negative perception out there. My response is to go on caring about every child that comes my way. Yet, I feel that I should have said more. Perhaps I did not have the courage that day. This story undoubtedly reveals more about the purpose of my study and about the tension that reveals part of my telos. Do

I always live out my value of social justice? Does this have to do with the quality of my interactions? Where is my voice when I need to communicate my values? My empathy also forces me to wonder whether the teacher in this story was even aware of her bias. I wonder how she may have viewed herself as a teacher and a human being and whether her self-image influenced her judgment. Thayer-Bacon and Thayer-Bacon help me when they say that “communication skills involve the ability to communicate and explain to others what you are thinking and feeling as well as the ability to listen and understand what others are trying to communicate to you” (1998, p. 153). Perhaps this story depicts my living contradiction. I espouse the value of social justice, yet I hesitate to voice my disappointment. I am afraid that I am not able to determine when it is necessary to listen and understand or when it is imperative to raise awareness by making biases explicit.

I have claimed before that I look for the positive way out when I sense that my resolve is dissipating. Shade (2001) claims that hope consists of three “habits” or powers that include persistence, resourcefulness, and courage. In his view, optimism differs from hopefulness in that “while the optimist views the world through rose-coloured glasses, the hopeful person acts to make the world a rose-colored place” (p. 140). He explains that “acting *as if* an end is realizable – that is, as if there are means which will make it a reality – plays a vital role in both testing and promoting its realizability” (p. 67). I identify with this view, and the quote reminds me of a different story.

Maria’s Little Scientist

Pedro was a very withdrawn boy when I started working with him. He had a passive attitude towards school. He never raised his hand or asked a question, and

would sit in front of his journal and stare at it. Maria, his classroom teacher, is a caring and warm person. She truly accepts all her students and never gives up when it comes to helping them. Pedro's parents are pleasant people who came to Canada a few years ago and do not speak English fluently. Pedro suffered from asthma and was often away from school. When he started Reading Recovery, I spoke to Pedro's mother and explained to her that daily attendance was essential so I could work with him every day. When Pedro started the Reading Recovery programme, he was very quiet. I could not find one topic in which he might be interested. One day, I took him to the school library and asked him to pick out a book he liked. While he wandered, I began to despair because this was probably my last resort. Finally, he found a book he loved. It was about animals. That's how I discovered that he loved to talk about nature and knew a great deal about animals. Obviously, I started choosing all the books I had about animals for him to read. He drew pictures and wrote about them. One morning, Pedro's teacher shared an exciting story with me. She had introduced a big book to the class as part of her Shared Reading session. It was a book about butterflies. Pedro raised his hand for the first time! Maria took advantage of that opportunity. Pedro became the "animal expert" in her classroom. Soon, Pedro became a leader in his group. He was now able to teach his friends and started having great conversations with his peers and teachers. Maria and I often met to talk about Pedro's progress. We also met with his mother on a regular basis. We talked to her about Pedro's expertise. She told us that the family watched the Discovery Channel every evening and often borrowed nature books from the public library. In their first language, they talked about what they saw in the books and television

programs. What a learning experience this was for us! Pedro had acquired his knowledge at home. His classroom teacher continued to praise him for his participation and called him her “little scientist.” Pedro did not take time off school any more. His asthma did not keep him home that often. He finished the Reading Recovery programme and when I went to see him in grade 3, he was reading books of a higher level of complexity and responding well to them. (Narrative, October 2000)

I find solace in this story. I lost track of Pedro, but I know that the following year, when he was in grade 4, he was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder. The psychologist who conducted the test was amazed at Pedro’s reading and writing levels. It did not match the scores she expected in a child with his syndrome. What does this all mean? Can we be hopeful that teachers can effect change in a classroom? Can they overcome societal barriers? Why was Maria so open minded about Pedro? He certainly fit the image of a *low achiever* at the beginning of grade 1. Is she aware of her *hopefulness*? In Maria’s case, perhaps her personal story helped her. I also knew that she interacted with the other grade 1 teachers every day. They met regularly to talk about their students and how to adapt their programme for them. I heard the way they talked and I am convinced that these teachers are truly caring. They all have different past stories, but one thread ties them all together. They teach with their knowledge and their hearts. Pedro may not be a good candidate for a science degree, according to the EQAO results, but he was Maria’s “little scientist.” When he grows up, will he go to university? Or will he drive his dad’s truck, as he wrote one day? When I impose my values on Pedro, I hope he gets to the highest level of education possible. On the other hand, I hope he does something that makes him happy,

whatever that may be. I hope he will continue reading books about animals for pleasure and sharing his love of nature.

Two stories, two different tones. The first one shows what I view as my living contradiction. I am a caring teacher who has hope in her students. When I remain silent or fail to advocate for the children who do not have a “voice,” I deny my values of caring and hope. The second story tells me that my hope and caring are the driving force of my teaching.

I still need to delve into whether I practice the type of leadership that touches people differently, as Sergiovanni (1992) describes his leadership model based on “moral authority” (p. 119). I especially relate to the “moral commitment to children” (p. 120) that goes beyond curriculum mandates. My next story shows how I am nurtured and reassured by the example of the leaders around me.

One Kid’s Dignity

One morning, I was at the school’s office, sending a fax to a Reading Recovery teacher. The day had just started and Teri, my principal, was talking to a grade 8 student who had been sent down by his teacher. She was letting him know about certain rules that he needed to abide by. Suddenly, she noticed that the student was wearing a pair of running shoes that were probably two sizes bigger than his feet. So, she asked the secretary to measure the child’s foot with a ruler. I left the office after sending my faxes and thought nothing of what I had seen until I had to go back to get some phone numbers from the students list. When I approached the counter, I saw a pair of running shoes. They were for the student I had seen early in

the morning. He had been sent into the office because he had been rude to the teacher. The principal had been clear about what was acceptable and what would not be tolerated. However, when she saw the child's hand-me-down shoes, she did not hesitate to take care of what matters most: the student's dignity. Although she was not happy with his behaviour, she chose to help the child recover his self-esteem. Teri's commitment to children is evident in many areas of our school. She has a clear emphasis on early literacy. Her no-nonsense approach is easy to understand. Her empathy is also evident. I often see her talking to teachers about their personal problems and to kids whose names and life circumstances she knows well.

(Narrative, November 2000)

Another example of my principal's leadership style has to do with one of my Reading Recovery students. This story is a typical example of how the school can give the child the opportunity he lacks elsewhere.

Caring for Our Students and Ourselves

I started working with Keihin in April. He was at the end of grade 1 and was still reading pattern books. His story was plagued with problems that most of the adults with whom he interacted could not imagine experiencing. He and his mother had been homeless until he turned 3. His behaviour was inappropriate in the classroom. When I called his mother to let her know that I was going to be working with her son, I got the impression that Keihin was the caregiver in that place. Almost every day we had to call her and ask why Keihin was not at school. She would say that she had to go to work and had no one to pick him up or that she was not feeling

well and couldn't walk him to school. Teri said to me, "when she says something like that, tell her that we will send a cab to pick him up. We will put him on the bus to go home at the end of the day. If she says that she cannot wait for him at the bus stop, tell her that we will call one of her neighbours to do that, as long as she authorizes it." When we talk about Keihin and the reality he faces, we both agree that our school is the only place where he has a sense of belonging, caring, and boundaries.

Teri's leadership beliefs are evidenced in the way she cares about children. But Teri also leads by being "an advocate on [the teachers'] behalf" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 128). One morning, I was working at school when the secretary gave me a message from my daughter, Ana Laura, who is away at university. She had telephoned from Waterloo. "It is not an emergency," the secretary said, "but she needs to talk to you". I decided to call at lunchtime. "It will be good for her to try to solve whatever happened on her own," I thought. Lunchtime was only an hour away. When I finally phoned, her roommate told me that Ana Laura was at the hospital. She was fine but went because she needed to talk to someone about what had happened that morning. A student who lived right behind their house had committed suicide by hanging himself from a backyard tree, very close to Ana Laura's bedroom window, and she saw him when she opened it that morning. I felt like getting in the car and going to Waterloo, but I stayed at school. I was in shock about that poor child who committed suicide and my daughter who had to see that. Ana Laura called me an hour later and told me she was feeling better. She said I didn't have to go see her that night. I had many reasons to feel proud of Ana Laura's decision. She sought

counseling and surrounded herself with a great support group. However, everybody in her house was very upset, and I felt that I should have been there with her. When I shared what had happened with my principal, I realized that I was extremely upset about this episode too. Teri said something very simple to me. “Ana, next time your daughter calls you, you phone her back right away.” She knew exactly what was happening to me. Teaching is about caring. We are caring people. That’s why the thought of that student ending his life, his family, all the students who lived with him or around him, and my daughter who was just learning to be independent were invading me. It was too much to bear. Teri put me in touch with a reality I had chosen to ignore. I need to remember to care for my loved ones and myself in order to come back to my caring job full of energy. (Narrative, November 2000)

This story reflects two of the values I espouse, caring and moral leadership. They are two stories of the role models I choose to follow. As Van Manen (2000) says, “it seems that when we try to recall particular moments of caring it is often the intense experiences that stand out” (p. 317). Someone does not have a decent pair of shoes to wear, or comes to school on an empty stomach. A young person ends his life. Caring people react by feeling responsible for the person before them. “I cannot help but feel responsible even before I may *want* to feel responsible” said Levinas (1981, as cited by Van Manen, 2000, p. 320). My living contradiction is evidenced here as well, because I neglected to take care of my daughter and myself immediately.

In this chapter, I provided evidence of my values through stories as I shared stories that signal times when I do not live my values in my practice. Through my stories, I shared

an emerging telos, the tension that provided the impetus for my inquiry. In Chapter Three, I articulate an explanation of the methodology I chose for my study.

CHAPTER THREE: THE METHOD: THE VOICES

If voices had colour, hers would have been like a rainbow. It made words *live*. Whatever she said became a breathing entity, not a mere verbal statement or utterance. (Beverly, in The Story Girl, by Lucy Maud Montgomery, 1990, p. 12)

It is Sunday afternoon. Every member of my family is working on a weekend project. And here I am, sitting at the computer. After attempting some initial paragraphs that are promptly deleted, I finally remember my portfolio. “I should try to find a quote from one of my favourite books-I’ll find the inspiration there,” I say to myself. That is when I come across the excerpt from The Story Girl, by Lucy Maud Montgomery. The dear, old book is on my night table. My father brought it for me in 1994. When I was packing our belongings to come to Canada, I made sure that every book my daughters had set eyes on was securely packed for them to have here. I was hoping that those *dear friends* would keep them company and remind them of their roots, once in the new land. But I did not think about my childhood *friends*. My father did. In 1997, I began working on my professional portfolio. I had attended a conference where I listened to Donald Graves. He showed us his writing portfolio. One of its components was “personal reading.” That is why I included this idea in mine. As I looked through my portfolio folder, I came upon Beverly describing the Story Girl’s voice. “Perfect,” I thought. Just what I thought today while trying to find a good beginning for Chapter Three. The question is, why? Why start a chapter on the methodology of a thesis with such an excerpt? “Simple,” I tell myself. (Journal entry, March 10, 2002)

The method I used and the data I collected helped me to understand my contradictions, my story, and my work. The more I reflected on my study and my questions, the more I thought it to be about *voices*. As I worked on it, it became clearer how it was my voice that I was trying to find as I intended to examine my values in practice. Although it is clear to me now why action research with a strong narrative component makes sense, it was not that way at the beginning of my work with my supervisor, Dr. Susan Drake.

A journal entry I wrote in August 2000, the day after my first meeting with Susan Drake, illustrates my feelings about a methodology that I was trying to understand.

After two hours of work, I had to stop my web search because I felt overstimulated and more than overwhelmed with all the information I found on the Action Research site. I went downstairs to unload the dishwasher. A few minutes into the task, I felt cold and went upstairs to get a sweater. I got back to the kitchen and saw that I had left all the cabinet doors open. I had been putting away containers, plates, glasses, etc., in a disorderly way. I looked from a distance and thought, “very graphic, this shows how you are functioning today.” Suddenly, the initial negative thought turned into a positive one. The open cabinet doors represented the way my mind was opening to new learning. The web search I had been immersed in since 8:00 a.m., after my conversation with Susan, had unsettled me. I was excited to recognize some of my own thoughts in other people’s Ph.D. dissertations or articles. I learned a great deal in 2 hours. The action research process, its narrative component, its purpose, were all beginning to make sense to me. The question of how to improve my practice to help other teachers learn and change and the idea of this proposition as a way to observe whether I engage in *real talk* with them are beginning to sound very

exciting. Great! But why am I so scared then? Those open doors (I'm still looking at them) seem awfully threatening to me. Maybe this means I'm not ready and need to do more learning about action research and narrative before I start.... Maybe it means that I don't have the courage to engage in this process of change myself. Ah!, very interesting; especially when I get pretty annoyed with people who reject change. What about my fear to fill out an Ethics Review application? What is wrong with me? Is this about being afraid to ask for permission? Perhaps, but...wait. I think I know what it is...one of the things Susan said as I was leaving was, "don't worry, it will seem confusing at first. You will learn as you go through the process." Exactly; not only is this true, this is the very thing I tell the teachers I train, at the beginning of their learning process. In fact, I will be saying that to my new group in about a week. So, what do I do now? I close the cabinet doors and I deal with the feelings.

(Journal entry, August 2002)

This journal entry reveals how I began the journey. Now, the question is why.

Why Action Research?

'I know *something* interesting is sure to happen,' she said to herself, 'whenever I eat or drink anything; so I'll just see what this bottle does.'

(Alice in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, 1865/1994, p. 41)

The methodology I have chosen to follow is action research of the living educational theory genre. It is useful to look back at the foundation of this methodology. The origin of action research can be attributed to Kurt Lewin, who was a social scientist. Lewin (1946) showed how individuals could influence outcomes through their involvement in changing

work processes. Soon after, Corey (1953) perceived the importance of using action research in the education field as a way to cause social change. Stenhouse (1975) in the U.K. gave shape to the idea of a teacher as researcher, saying that teachers should be encouraged to develop ways to reflect on their practice and improve it. He affirmed that “it is not enough that teachers’ work should be studied: they need to study it themselves” (p. 143). Later, Schön (1983) applied the principle of reflective practice to five different professions including architecture and music performance. McNiff (1988) developed the Act, Reflect, Revise cycle, and Whitehead (1993) proposed action research in education based on the question, “How do I improve my practice?” He also proposed examining what the values are that we claim to have and question whether we live out our values in our practice. The living “I” (see Chapter One) is at the centre of the inquiry. In his approach, the researcher is not “the abstracted third person of the traditional disciplines but a real-life, flesh-and-blood first person who was telling a story of life itself” (McNiff, 2000, p. 199). Whitehead developed the idea of living educational theories that are generated through stories told by practitioners to show the process of their own efforts to improve their personal practice to effect social good. He explained the concept as “an educational theory which can generate valid descriptions and explanations for the educational development of individuals” (1989, p. 2). The difference between a theory elaborated with a traditional view and a living educational theory resides in that “it is a description and explanation of practice which is part of the living form of the practice itself” (p. 5). Whitehead’s work appeals to me because his living educational theory approach requires that the researcher examine her story and find in it, and through the accounts of others, evidence that her practice and, in turn, the practice of the

practitioners with whom she works have improved. McNiff (2000, p. 203) lists five essential key elements of this type of action research.

They are:

1. I, the researcher, am at the core of the process. My research is the vehicle for my own learning as I explore how I can improve my practice and examine my values in it.

2. I am learning about myself first, in order to change a social situation. McNiff warns us that “no one should make judgments about other people’s situations until they have shown how they have worked to improve their own, and even then they need to proceed with caution” (p. 203).

3. I am not expecting closure; I embrace ongoing growth. I know that a new tension will arise from this study. This self-education process, Newman (1998) says, implies recognizing the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions operating within my practice as well as in schools and school systems. But recognizing inconsistency isn’t the end of practice-as-inquiry. As I learn to detect disparities between my practice and theory, I need to take action; I need to change what I do. (p. 23)

McNiff (2000) adds that action researchers “need to show how we deal with the turmoil, and this is a core value of action research. This means telling the stories of struggles and how we tried to work through them” (p. 204).

4. I wish to share the process with others, that is, I want it to be participative. Although my action research begins with the “I” in mind, it is embedded in my social situation. Action research is “always work with others” (p. 204). In the next section, I will show how these others will offer their own views so I can legitimize the process.

5. I perceive the process as an educative one. An important characteristic of educational research is that researchers intend to show “the growth of their own understanding, and how that then has a potential beneficial influence in the lives of others” (p. 204).

I adopt McNiff’s (2000) metaphor of the research cycle. She writes that, even though action research can be seen as a unified entity, episodes may trigger the search to go into unexpected tangents. This might give the impression that more than one inquiry is taking place. They are not, however, because action research “is embodied in the researcher, the integrating focus of the inquiry” (p. 205). McNiff continues: “What may be seen as one ‘cycle’ is the transformation of what went before and contains the potential of what is yet to come, a generative transformational process. One cycle is part of a wider system of cycles; they are connected by and embodied in the self-replicating pattern” (p. 205). The data collection tools I chose allowed me to enter the realms of what was, and what is yet to come.

Data Collection

Thus we might say that through others we become ourselves. Here it becomes clear why everything internal in higher forms was of necessity external, that is, was for others what it is now for oneself. Every higher mental function necessarily passes through an external stage of development because function is primarily social. (L. S. Vygotsky, 1998, vol. 4, p. 105)

The data forms I chose are narrative, journal writing, e-mail correspondence, videotaping, interviews, and critical friends' feedback.

Narrative

Since "I" is at the centre of the inquiry, I included my personal narratives. "There is no *one* way or *right* way to write a personal history account," say Cole and Knowles (2000, p. 32). I agree, and add that when narrative is chosen to understand the self, the writing becomes spiraling, not linear. The encircling movement implicit in the drawing of a spiral shape brings me back to Connelly and Clandinin's (1994) four-direction paradigm (see Introduction). I find myself going from the past to the present, from my thoughts to those of others. Moreover, because I see the question of improving my practice as including questions about my personal life, the personal account is the window through which I look at both, every time. I have drawn from the thinking of many authors here. I justify my referring to all of this in previous chapters precisely because my accounts, my rationales, and my readings converge in two central ideas-my questions. Throughout the writing of these chapters I could never convey one idea without bringing the others into my web.

It was only at the beginning of my Master's studies that I was introduced to narrative as a research form. I was very fortunate to take my first course (EDUC 5P97) with Susan Drake. As I worked on my assignments, my writing took me to the origin of my values, my love of teaching, and my many struggles. Susan Drake taught me how to weave theory into the story. I truly enjoyed writing, and as I did, I remembered not only the events but also my love of writing.

This is a fragment of a piece I wrote in the fall of 2000.

I also enjoyed writing in elementary school. I will never forget the time my mother had to go to school to convince my grade 4 teacher that she had not helped me with a story I wrote about the ocean. She did not believe I could have possibly done it, although I was her *best student*. I felt very confused about that. All I had done was describe the vacation place I cherished. Why did she not think I could do it? Donald Graves (my writing process guru) would tremble at the thought of a teacher not recognizing that when a child writes about something she loves, her personal voice is heard. Lucky are we, teachers of this generation of children, because now we know that “the writing process has a driving force called *voice*...Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing. It is that part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process. Take the voice away and the writing collapses of its own weight.... Our data show that when the writer makes a good choice of subject, voice booms through” (Graves, 1994, p. 81; Narrative, November 2000).

Again, the word *voice* resurfaces in my reflections. Narrative is a powerful vehicle for finding it.

Journal Writing

My journal entries constituted another enlightening tool in my study. At first, I did not know what was I supposed to write about. Newman (1998) explains that

the dilemma in an action research situation is you may not even realize something interesting has occurred that you ought to think about unless you're already in the habit of keeping a journal or reflective log. Because teaching is so complex, we're accustomed to coping with the many things demanding our attention at once without really thinking about them.” (p. 3)

I could not do it though. I could not write a journal entry every day. The demands of my job did get in the way, but the undeniable problem was that I did not know what I was looking for. I am not sure how it happened but I began *hearing* comments teachers would make in the middle of our Reading Recovery sessions. Those comments would trigger a thought I would connect with my inquiry. So, I got in the habit of jotting down a few words in a corner of my planner as a reminder. Later, I read about another way to capture insights that may provide the purpose for a journal entry. I started writing memos to myself. I found this idea as I was searching an action research website. The article by Shankar Sankaran (2000) explains that to do action research he went through the process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting “in a way which was somehow different to my usual routine” (p. 1). According to Sankaran, a researcher can use memos as a way to develop an idea. He says: “memos could be written to clarify ideas, do data analysis by standing apart from the data, integrate the theory and much more” (p. 2).

The reading of the article was of great assistance. I got in the habit of writing those memos. They always start with the word *Remember*. I wrote memos to remind myself of a possible journal topic, an idea I came upon while reading the theory, a recollection of some past experience I had forgotten, *et cetera*. It was very edifying to do this because of the precise nature of action research, which begins with “the muddle of daily work, with the moments that stand out from the general flow” (Newman, (1998, p. 3).

E-mail Correspondence

In the course of my work with teachers, I rely on e-mail correspondence to discuss all kinds of topics that are of concern to us. We discuss student progress, how to engage a

particular child who is not responding to our teaching, implementation issues, and sometimes how we are feeling as the result of our constant trials and tribulations. And as I write or when I read the e-mails sent by Reading Recovery teachers, often words or phrases jump at me and provide an insight that triggers a reflection. I decided to include this tool as part of my data in hopes to see patterns emerge from it.

Videotaping

As a classroom teacher, I have videotaped myself working with a group of children, many times. I did it to examine my line of questioning when working on a writing process session or facilitating a Tribes (a social skills programme) activity. I videotaped my reading sessions to show other teachers how I worked with a group while the rest of the class was engaged in activities, or how to conduct a Shared Reading or Interactive Writing session. For this study, I decided to videotape myself while having an interaction with one Reading Recovery teacher after she taught a student. This type of conversation, during which I provide feedback to the teacher about her initial concerns or questions, is part of my daily work as a Reading Recovery teacher leader. Before starting my study, I had grown concerned about what goes on beyond the spare word. What do voice and gestures do to an interaction? Mitchell and Weber (1998) write:

We are so caught up with the symbolic value of ‘voice’ that we risk forgetting to take seriously the very real and physical voices of teachers and students that are integral to voice-as-power, voice-as-authority, voice-as-resistance. (p. 202)

Interviews

Reflecting on the participatory element of my action research, I decided to interview classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and principals. I invited them to share with me significant moments of transformative practice in their own lives, as well as feedback to me about ways in which I can improve my practice. Throughout an open-ended, one-on-one interview, in the absence of a questionnaire, I engaged in a conversation with my colleagues. The one-on-one audiotaped session provided the opportunity to extract common themes I connected with the themes emerging from my personal stories and journal entries. Neuman (2000) explains that

qualitative researchers adhere to the core principle of validity, to be truthful (i.e., avoid false or distorted accounts). They try to create a tight fit between their understanding, ideas, and statements about the social world and what is actually occurring in it. (p. 171)

Rather than making a claim to be *objective*, the qualitative researcher emphasizes “trustworthiness as a parallel idea to objective standards in quantitative research design” (p. 126).

Critical Friends

A dialogue journal was established with three critical friends. They are an administrator, a Reading Recovery teacher, and a classroom teacher. Although our relationship began at work, it has transcended the professional. They are very dear personal friends as well. They responded to my journal entries and stories. I asked my critical friends

to challenge my thinking and ask me questions to stretch it. Costa and Kallick (1993) define a critical friend as

a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend. A critical friend takes the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward. (cited in Lambert et al., 1995, p. 89)

Reflexive inquiry

The data forms I selected enabled me to engage in reflexive inquiry. When I first began this process, I was concerned about what I perceived as the vagueness of this type of research. Cole and Knowles (2000) write that “reflexive inquiry (and other forms of qualitative research) is based on principles of an emergent design. Reflexive inquiry is no less systematic than other forms of research; however, the key difference and hallmark of reflexive inquiry is flexibility” (p. 104). As my work progressed, I learned to “trust the process and trust [my] own judgment as teacher and researcher” (p. 104).

Reflexivity is also an essential quality of a qualitative researcher, because it is this quality that gives “rigour” to the enterprise. Tricoglus (2001) quotes Ball (1990) as saying that qualitative research should have rigour, and rigour is established by the “researcher’s awareness of what is possible to say given the nature of the data that was and was not collected” (p. 138). The reflexivity of the researcher is the ability to monitor his or her role in gathering and analysis of data. According to Tricoglus, it is the critical spirit in which the research has been carried out. “This critical spirit takes place both internally in the form of

the researcher's self-awareness and reflexivity, and externally in opening the research to the scrutiny and critical appraisal of others" (p. 138). I think this quote demonstrates the rationale for my choice of action research with a narrative component. My awareness grew as I studied my self and posed questions to others.

Issues and Concerns

"The main thing is not to lose our bearings". Always following his compass, he kept on guiding his men toward the invisible north so that they would be able to get out of that enchanted region. (Jose Arcadio Buendia, in One Hundred Years of Solitude, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 1967/1998, p. 12)

As I concluded this chapter, I was left with several concerns. One of them referred to the confidentiality issue. Cole and Knowles (2000) affirm that "the kinds of issues that seem most critical relate to the ethical and political implications of engaging in practice-based research. Researching, like teaching, is a moral and ethical enterprise. Clearly, every effort must be made to respect those involved" (pp. 106-107). I must agree and also recognize that my study may have limitations due to the number of ethical considerations this process entails. In Chapter Four, I explain how I dealt with confidentiality issues.

A second concern related to my ability to maintain my reflexivity while I find my way in this *enchanted* land. Throughout this exciting process I remained aware of the dangers of interpretation. In Chapter Four, I delve into data collection and analysis concepts.

Will I lose my bearings as I share my interpretations? What is my trustworthy compass? Drake (1992b) guides me when she writes:

Enjoy the journey. Remember that when you can't create a whole picture, then you don't have all the pieces yet; when the data are saturated, you will have the whole. This means you start to see and hear the same thing over and over again. Keep observing, listening and searching as if you were a detective. It's an exciting, rewarding process, but you have to be willing to travel into the unknown for an unspecified amount of time until the patterns emerge." (p. 9)

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

‘If there is no meaning in it,’ said the King, ‘that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn’t try to find any...’(King of Hearts, in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll, 1865/1994, p. 143)

I have written of my life and my search for meaning in people’s actions. I have shared my concern about the quality of my interactions. As I write this chapter, I feel there is imperfection in the reproduction of words. I am faced with the task of speaking with clarity in an ambiguous terrain. As I analyzed my data, I tried to find consistency in the meanings I constructed and the ones my colleagues developed. Neuman (2000) says that qualitative researchers “accept that different researchers or researchers using alternative measures will get distinctive results” (p. 170). In the educational field, Fullan (2001b) stresses that “acquiring meaning, of course, is an individual act but its real value for student learning is when *shared* meaning is achieved across a group of people working in concert” (p. 46). In my professional life, I seek interactions with people who stand for change in our education system. Therefore, the voices the reader will hear are the voices of that group of educators. I am interested in my transformation and that of the teachers with whom I work. I start with my experiences and reach out to a few others to come back to my central concern: my practice.

As I have said before, my personal accounts are the products of my recollections and interpretations. Cole and Knowles (2000) say: “what we are after in personal history inquiry is self-knowledge – our personal truths” (p. 44).

I must make every attempt not to distort the accounts of the others' stories. When I began working on my proposal, I knew that I wanted to include my colleagues' voices. It has become clearer now that the origin of this interest resides in the nature of my work, which I view now, more than before, as an interaction process. I cannot look at improving my practice without hearing what others have to say about their experiences with or without me.

I know I must not let my own story get in the way of reproducing the others' voices. The participants in my study read their interview transcripts and comments about their feedback. They verified and accepted my interpretation of their words and allowed me to use them in my study by signing their consent. Tilley (1998) says: "returning transcripts to participants, asking them to consider and respond to their words in print, is one way researchers can check their interpretations of the participants' contributions" (p. 326).

The participants were also given the choice to withdraw from the study at any point. McNiff et al. assert "you must let your participants know that their rights are protected and that if they wish to withdraw they may do so" (1997, p. 35). Protecting the rights of others and my own are two important considerations. The key point is to remember that the purpose of an inquiry process such as action research is "to inform and enhance teachers' practice and pupils' learning" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 140).

Children were mentioned in my personal narratives. I used pseudonyms for them as well, even though it was not requested. I sought consent from the adults whose names appear in those narratives. They read the stories and approved their content and the use of their names in them.

Permission for my research to proceed was granted on February 5, 2002 by Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and by the Brock Ethics Board on February 19, 2002. As soon as I obtained approval, I conducted my interviews, gathered e-mail correspondence and conducted a one-on-one videotaping session. What follows is an account of the data analysis process.

Recurring Words

In qualitative research, data assume many forms. The fascinating aspect of this type of research is that spoken and written words, images, voices, gestures, and settings all intertwine to give sense to a personal quest. Neuman (2000) says:

Qualitative researchers emphasize the human factor and the intimate firsthand knowledge of the research setting: they avoid distancing themselves from the people or events they study. This does not mean arbitrarily interjecting personal opinion, being sloppy about data collection, or using evidence selectively to support personal prejudices. It means taking advantage of personal insight, feelings, and human perspectives to understand social life more fully. (p. 126)

In Chapters One and Two, I revealed a developing telos that I defined at the time as my need to find my voice and as a concern for the quality of my interactions. The data collection and analysis processes provided a welcomed insight for me, as they unveiled the themes that constitute the metaphors of my telos. I see this study as the journey through which I discovered that *becoming* is a fluid process through which my voice develops. As I began my inquiry, I valued the importance of turning the research question around and concentrating on the *I*. Perhaps that is why I see this process as a continuum. As soon as I

have become, I begin a new journey. I come to an understanding and embark on a quest for a deeper level of awareness. As Neuman explains:

Qualitative researchers...reflect on ideas before data collection, but they develop many, if not most, of their concepts during data collection activities. The qualitative researcher reexamines and reflects on the data and concepts simultaneously and interactively. Researchers start gathering data and creating ways to measure based on what they encounter. As they gather data, they reflect on the process and develop new ideas. The ideas give them direction and suggest new ways to measure. In turn, the new ways to measure determine how the researchers will continue to collect data. They bridge ideas and data through this type of continuing, interactive process. (2000, p. 158)

As I conducted my interviews, I began to hear reoccurring words and concepts that sounded like echoes of words I wrote and concepts I elaborated in my own narratives and journal entries. Those recurring words were *conversation, dialogue, listening, questioning, telling and writing stories, relationships, hope, and caring*. They constituted my initial coding. Neuman (2000) says: “qualitative coding is an integral part of data analysis. It is guided by the research question and leads to new questions” (p. 420). Although I started this process as I interviewed and read my narratives and journal entries, it happened spontaneously as well as I went about my daily work. To my surprise, while engaging in my normal interactions, I began to hear the same words I had highlighted in my initial coding. This aspect of the process was exciting. It seemed as though a heightened state of awareness was developing for me.

Freeman (1998) describes the process in a different way. He says:

Four activities: **naming, grouping, finding relationships, and displaying** are the basic elements of any data analysis. Although you will enter the process at different points depending on the purpose of the analysis, the four activities remain the same and stand in the same relationship to one another. (p. 102)

I find this quote helpful when I try to understand the process by which I grouped and regrouped the named themes. Although I said it was exciting, it was a difficult process too, as I saw relationships building in different ways throughout the data. At first the themes I came upon were very fragmented and disorganized. Further readings led me to group themes according to the voices of three groups of people: *colleagues, administrators, and critical friends*. This grouping too is closely related to my evolving understanding of the intent of my study as it relates to the different roles my work entails.

This process of grouping and finding relationships finally guided my thinking in the form of two main themes: *Conversations* and *Relationships*. The common words I had initially found are embedded in those two themes. *Conversation* involves listening, questioning, telling stories, and dialoguing through written stories. The theme *Relationships* evolved from the same common words. I came upon that term because, as I read my transcripts, journal entries, critical friends' feedback, and narratives, and when I watched the videotaped session, I realized that I establish relationships through my conversations in the different roles I play in my work as a Reading Recovery teacher leader. Moreover, I realized that the voices of the people with whom I interacted appeared in all the common words that I saw emerge at the beginning. I had conversations with classroom teachers and Reading Recovery teachers. I listened to them and to the administrators. I heard my voice in my

stories and I heard my critical friends' voices when they shared their written feedback with me.

Therefore, I redefined my telos. I interpreted it as developing a voice that enables me to interact in the different contexts in which I work while listening to the voices around me. By contexts I mean spatial and temporal ones. Just as Connelly and Clandinin (1994) proposed, I looked inward to find an inner voice, outward to find a voice to reflect with others, backward to find the roots of my voice, and forward to search for a voice that will help me in the future.

I interviewed 2 grade 1 teachers, a grade 5 teacher who is a former Reading Recovery teacher, and 3 trained Reading Recovery teachers. I also interviewed 2 administrators and shared my narratives with 3 critical friends. I reviewed e-mail interactions with Reading Recovery teachers, and videotaped myself having a feedback session with a Reading Recovery teacher.

Since my goal was to find out how I can facilitate transformative learning experiences with the teachers with whom I work, I invited my colleagues to give me feedback about our interactions and the quality of my work. Each interview was a conversation where stories were shared. Clandinin (1993) talked about a process through which a group of teachers engaged in collaborative inquiry. She explained that the members of the group "learned to make spaces for each other in which to hear our voices, to know that in our voices were our ways of making sense of ourselves and of our work" (p. 2). Although my inquiry was personal, my interviews felt like a collaborative effort. I see in this quote the reason why I chose to conduct them as a conversation. My telos is in there. I can find my own voice when I hear my colleagues' stories. I can make sense of what I do when

they share their experiences with me. Clandinin explains that “narrative themes emerged from the inquiry” (p. 11). When I read that excerpt, I felt compelled to see my themes as part of a narrative, as I see the tone of this research as “story-telling.”

I define a narrative theme that emerged from my interviews as *a view of teachers that a particular type of conversation was conducive to their transformative practices*. The concepts of *self-reflection* and *narrative* are two themes that emerged from the conversations. A second main theme can be defined as the importance of *building relationships* to facilitate transformative learning.

How do the narratives relate to action research? When I chose to do action research of the living educational theory type, I intended to study my work and sought to improve it. McNiff (2000) says: “when I study how I work with others in organisational settings, I am potentially generating my own theory of organisation” (p. 14). She continues: “The theory exists in the people who create it; it is a theory people live by, a theory of their lives. It is represented in the stories they tell and the words they write” (p. 14). Therein lies the connection between the narrative component of my study and action research. The narratives I shared nurture my action research. What follows is my explanation of the themes I extracted, how they helped me look at my practice, and how they relate to theoretical concepts.

Facilitation as Conversation

The theme *facilitation as conversation* illustrates beautifully the reason for my inquiry. Both Reading Recovery and classroom teachers talked about our conversations as a very important factor in their transformative learning. As I read my transcripts, I noticed

is essential for transformation. He says: “Discourse, in the context of Transformation Theory, is that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief” (pp. 10-11). Dialogue involves group participation. Fred talked about listening and thinking as components of his participation. Mezirow explained that “discourse is the forum in which ‘finding one’s voice’ becomes a prerequisite for free full participation” (p. 11). As a facilitator of dialogue, I feel that I need to allow each member of the group to find her/his place in it. Effective participation is probably the result of an unthreatening environment. Fred’s feedback told me that I am able to provide that atmosphere for the group. This study has allowed me to see evidence of the quality of my work. Once I see that I can facilitate dialogue, I become more aware of what I need to do for that to continue.

It was exciting for me to discover aspects of the theory of transformative learning in the content of my interviews. Mezirow says: “the generic role of discourse in human communication implies certain conditions for its full realization” (2000, p. 13). In order to share in participatory discourse, participants must have “freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception” (p. 13). Nicole’s reflection on past Reading Recovery training sessions contained that factor. She said: *“Sometimes I didn’t have the energy to answer a question or I needed to argue some point. I never felt that I was put on the spot. It didn’t upset you that we didn’t agree. You were sensitive about that and were open to conversation. You didn’t always have to be the leader.”* This reflection tells me that I am capable of facilitating a genuine conversation where I do not need to hold the role of “power holder.” This also relates to another factor in Mezirow’s conditions for participatory discourse. He refers to it as “an equal opportunity to participate in the various roles of

discourse” (p. 13). I was glad to hear from Nicole that I am able to accept disagreement. I know that Reading Recovery teachers in training are exposed to concepts that may sound foreign at the beginning of the process. It is very important that I accept this “dissonance” and invite people to give the new ideas a try. Consensus can not be achieved in one day. In a conversation model like the one we have in our training sessions, agreement occurs after evidence is weighed and people begin to see other points of view as valid. Mezirow asserts that “agreement based on the unchallenged norms of a culture will be obviously less informed and dependable than those based on a wider range of experience” (p. 12). In order to facilitate transformative practice, I must encourage teachers to voice their disagreement. This, in turn, will provide for more opportunities for dialogue to arise.

Facilitating Self-Reflection

The ability to facilitate self-reflection is a theme that emerges from the conversation model as a facilitator. Alida provided examples of the factors that foster self-reflection in our interactions when she said: *“I like the way you probe. You constantly ask: ‘what do you think?’ Even if I don’t respond because I’m thinking, I like the talk and the conversation. Also, you take it further. You don’t leave issues hanging.”* As I reread this, I thought that although Alida identified concepts such as *probing* and *questioning*, she saw them arise in the context of a conversation. She pointed out the value of the question as a two-way interaction. Cranton (1998) said about the importance of “challenging and questioning”:

How does the process of transformative learning start? We know that the process is one of critical self-reflection kindled by an experience that is discrepant with our expectations, assumptions or values. This may happen by chance, of course, but if

we agree with Mezirow that transformative learning is a goal of adult education, it cannot be left to chance. Neither can it be intervention, imposition or indoctrination on the part of the educator. It is the power of the learning group, of which the educator is a part, that is most likely to lead individuals to critical reflection. (pp. 196-197)

Alida reminded me of a very important aspect of my role as a Reading Recovery teacher leader. Cranton (1998) pointed out that it is the group interaction that helps individuals challenge assumptions. Although Alida praised me for my ability to probe and elicit thinking, I know that I must remain conscious of the importance of this aspect of the conversation model because this awareness will remind me to maintain openness and allow discrepancies. When I facilitate group interaction, I remain part of it. This means that I question others and myself, I share my knowledge, and I embrace the others' knowledge. That way, probing, eliciting, and questioning become an interactive process through which every member of the group is invited to challenge assumptions.

The Power of Narrative or Story-Telling

The importance of story-telling also reoccurred throughout my conversations with the participants. I see it as immersed in the theme I am discussing. Here I talk about teachers' stories. These, for example, can be the stories we tell when we share our struggles with our students. Alida remembered a recent Continuing Contact session. She said: *"It was the best session because you gave me time to share a problem I had. I didn't know if I should take a student into the program because we didn't know if he would be a good candidate."* I asked her what helped. She answered: *"It was the sharing, because although*

the group didn't give me a definitive answer, it helped me to make a decision. I came to school, talked to my principal and took the child. I'm thrilled that I took him. He is a success story, whatever the outcome." I view this example as one of narrative that helps the teacher understand her work. Teachers tell each other stories about their students and their lessons, and as they interact, they understand more fully what they do regardless of the answers they get from the group. Brooks (2000b) talks about transformative learning "as a narrative process" (p. 152). I think this concept can be applied to teachers' stories. She says:

In this type of transformative learning, personal storytelling functions as a way of establishing relational intimacy. Creatively integrating discrete bits of data into a meaningful story requires a keen sense of context and audience as well as a sense of self-competency. (p. 152)

I believe that Alida heard our comments and made a decision after she told the story. The solution to the problem emerged as a result of her telling the story.

Marian also talked about the power of stories. She believed that my sharing with the group fostered her transformative learning. She said: *"In the training year, at first, I didn't think the kids would ever finish the program. You gave us hope that it could happen."* I shared with Marian that when she came to teach a lesson behind the screen for the new training group, I was happy to hear her say to the group: *"You've got to believe that they (the students) can do it."* I asked her how she came to that understanding. She said: *"It was your sharing. You shared with us your experiences with kids, other teachers' experiences with kids. You shared with us e-mails that Reading Recovery teachers wrote, where they told one or two stories of children who were very hard to help and were successful in the end."*

Marian's comment teaches me that by sharing a story the teacher can envision a solution and regain determination. It also tells me that when I share my own stories with a group of teachers, I am providing a piece of information that allows them to question their assumptions. I am also providing a model of constant self-reflection. In synthesis, when I share a story and self-reflect "aloud", I position myself *in* the circle in which the discussion takes place. Cranton (1998) accepts that the facilitator needs to give up position power that "has as its sources formal authority, control over resources and rewards, control over punishments, control over information and ecological or environmental control" (p. 198). She adds: "however, the educator maintains personal power that has as its sources expertise, friendship, loyalty and charisma. We remain authentic, true to ourselves, and we do not deny our experience and knowledge" (p. 198). When I share my stories with my groups, I come from a position of experience, knowledge, and expertise. It has taken a great deal of self-reflection for me to see this as a positive force rather than as arrogance. This insight reflects my own transformation process.

As I read the theory and listen to my colleagues' voices, I learn more about my work and myself. Clandinin (1993) describes this beautifully when she says:

As we listened to each other's stories and told our own, we learned to make sense of our teaching practices as expressions of our personal practical knowledge. It was knowing that came out of our pasts and found expression in the present situations in which we found ourselves. (p. 1)

The Potential of Written Reflections

I asked two critical friends to give me feedback about my values. My dear friends Suzanne and Peggy are two women who embody critical reflection. We have engaged in thoughtful conversations for many years now. Our friendship began in our workplace, but it continued in our lives. Suzanne is a Reading Recovery teacher and Peggy is a classroom teacher.

My friends read Evangeline's and Pedro's stories (in Chapter Two) and my thoughts on them. They wrote back with their own reflections. In turn, I asked them to give me feedback on my interpretations of their thoughts. It was exciting to learn of my friends' own reflection processes. Suzanne said: *"As I reflected on your journal entries and on your experiences with Pedro and Evangeline, it brought back many memories of similar children and of similar experiences. This has been valuable for me and I have been reflecting on my teaching and values."*

Peggy began with a story of her own. She said: *"You speak of hopefulness, and of seeing gifts in each child. It is something essential yet challenging for teachers. Just yesterday, a parent of a very challenging student in my class said, 'I think it will be a long time before he has a teacher like you again. You see the unique way he learns and responds and you accept him for who he is.' I believe that as I mature and grow, I have become more accepting of my own 'unique style', with its positives and negatives. I think that this has made me more accepting of others in my life, including the children in my classroom. Acceptance is an important quality to have, both as a teacher and as a human being."*

When I shared my stories, the process became interactive. There is great power in narrative for teacher transformation. Peggy's story provides an excellent example of

personal growth and how that change helps a teacher in her interactions with students. It shows how this is a process from *within*.

I was particularly surprised about my critical friends' responses. I said before that my friends and I engage in thoughtful conversations regularly. However, reading their feedback made this feel like a unique experience. I think the power is in the written word. Perhaps one reason why print has such significance for me lies in my personal story. I sometimes wonder whether the notes my father wrote before he died were thoughts he had shared with me before and that I had not been able to "hear" until I saw them on paper.

Jean is a classroom teacher who shared with me what happened when she was asked to reflect in writing on past school experiences. After sharing her story with me, Jean told me that it had been very powerful to do that exercise. She said: "*I think what happens is that these memories stay in your subconscious, and when you are asked to reflect, they come to the front and you realize that they influenced you.*" This comment and my impression of my critical friends' feedback prove again that time must be devoted to some written reflection as well as conversation.

Transferring the Learning: A Sign of Transformative Practice

My colleagues pointed out what helped them in their transformative learning, independent of my interaction with them. I capture here what one of them told me about their own process of transformative practice. Bobbie is a former Reading Recovery and kindergarten teacher. She told me what helped her when she was implementing her kindergarten program. Bobbie's words seem to reveal the importance of interactions in teachers' transformative practices. It is in the interactions with colleagues that we can name

the problem, share the concerns, and eventually come to a new understanding. Bobbie talked about her “*thinking with my [grade] partner*” as the enabler. She went on to define this process as a “*constant process of problem-solving together.*” I include this small piece as possible evidence that time must be given for teachers to go through the process of changing practices. I wonder whether expecting teachers to try a new innovation after another without the time to reflect, disagree, and share with others hinders the opportunity for the new approach to take root.

The importance of meaningful conversation both in a formal professional development model like the Reading Recovery program and as spontaneous interactions amongst teachers was confirmed when I talked to my colleagues. I know that Bobbie’s example can be replicated many times.

No comment was more surprising in my interviews than the one made by Nicole about how the conversation model of our Reading Recovery sessions changed her practice. Reading Recovery teacher leaders constantly hear teachers talk about how they changed the way in which they teach reading and writing in the classroom as a result of their Reading Recovery training. This is extremely powerful because it shows how an intervention program has the potential to improve the system at more than one level. However, Nicole went further when she reflected on her teaching in grade 5. She pointed out: “*I know that I do certain things that follow the Reading Recovery training model. Our circle discussions, for instance. I find myself doing that with my students now, and the kids picked it up quickly, because the conversational style helps. The kids don’t feel threatened at all. They are willing to offer more.*” This was the first time I heard a former Reading Recovery teacher make a connection between our typical Reading Recovery sessions and her classroom

practice. Both training and continuing contact sessions start with teachers sitting in a circle. Emphases for the session are discussed, and the two teachers who will teach behind the one-way screen provide information about their students and ask for feedback from the group. After the two teaching sessions, the discussion resumes in the circle. When I reread this transcript, I reflected on my practice once more. Perhaps after 4 years as a Reading Recovery teacher leader I had begun to take this model for granted. Nicole's observation reminded me of its unique nature and value. Nicole's description of the transformation of her practice opens the door to new possibilities. Therein lies one more reason to continue to strive for improvement in my interactions with teachers.

The Videotaping Experience

I include the interpretation of my videotaping within the theme of *conversation* because it has to do with the quality of my interactions. In the past, I videotaped myself teaching different types of lessons. It was extremely enlightening to watch myself, but it was even more useful to observe the reactions and behaviours of my students. I saw that as an opportunity to explore many issues, such as classroom management, level of comfort of my students, engagement with the activity, and my own interaction with my students. For that reason, I looked forward to, and at the same time dreaded, the idea of watching myself having a feedback session with a Reading Recovery teacher. I never like hearing my voice or observing my gestures. Mitchell and Weber (1998) say:

Even if we ourselves initiate the experience, knowing we are going to be videotaped means knowing we are going to be exposed (open) to the camera's unfaltering stare,

to the cameraperson's or viewer's judgment, and perhaps most importantly, to our own uneasy stare. (p. 190)

They use the term "self-video" as a vehicle to

encompass a variety of activities: repeatedly videotaping and then viewing teaching; reflecting; imagining and acting on the basis of emergent video self-knowledge; experimenting and playing with pedagogical possibilities...revisiting videotapes from the past to catch the fluidity, tensions, and contradictions of professional identity and growth (memory work); making videos to reinvent and express oneself anew as teacher. (p. 190)

Surprisingly, when I finally sat down to watch the video with paper and pencil at hand, I did not feel uncomfortable. I noticed some very positive things. The conversation the teacher and I had was extremely relaxed and pleasant. I could attribute this to my abilities, but I hesitate to do that for a very simple reason. As Jean said during her interview, *"in an interaction there is always 50-50."* The teacher with whom I was dialoguing is a very reflective person. She taught a lesson, and after that she began telling me what she thought about it before I had a chance to initiate a dialogue. It was obvious that she felt at ease. Therefore, I was sitting back and my tone of voice was affable. We laughed a few times and I shared with her a new insight I had while I was observing the lesson. I did not sense any tension while I viewed the tape.

When I described this datum tool for the Ethics Review Board, I specified that the only purpose of the videotaping session would be to watch my body language and behaviours and that the video camera would be aimed at me only. I think now that it would

have been much more useful to observe the interaction as opposed to just myself. Jean was right; “in an interaction there is always 50-50” and my entire practice revolves around that.

Nevertheless, “self-video” is a powerful tool. As Mitchell and Weber (1998) say, “the beauty of self-video is that it can pick us up from wherever we are and nudge us on in a new direction” (p. 198). This part of my data collection has motivated me to videotape my sessions with teachers and my interactions with students, as I have not done that for quite a few years.

Finally, the videotaping session helped me improve my practice by making explicit that I learn from my interactions with teachers. I was glad to hear myself sharing my own insights with my colleague. As I said before, the process is interactive. I learn from my observations and interactions, but more important, I learn that this process is endless. I see this process as one of leading *with* the teachers with whom I work. I will come back to this idea in Chapter Five.

Building Relationships

A second theme also emerged as the second main factor in a transformative learning process. The classroom teachers with whom I worked talked about the importance of building relationships before we can expect to effect transformative learning experiences. The administrators with whom I talked pointed it out consistently when they referred to change.

Fullan (2001a) devotes a chapter to the importance of relationships as a key change theme. His chapter 4 is entitled, *Relationships, relationships, relationships*. He says: “In the past, if you asked someone in a successful enterprise what caused the success, the answer

was ‘It’s the people.’ But that’s only partially true: it is the *relationships* that make the difference” (p. 51).

Bobbie’s reflection on her work with a partner could have been part of this theme as well. The reason for this is that it was probably the relationship she built with her colleague that enabled the “*constant process of problem-solving together*” to which she alluded. The positive feeling I had when I observed my videotaping session is probably rooted in the power of my relationship with the person with whom I was interacting. Here resides one of the challenges I faced when I began to analyze my data. It was hard to determine where to include my colleagues’ comments, as the themes seemed to overlap.

Cathy is a grade 1 teacher with whom I worked very closely in a joint effort to help our students perform better in her classroom. In Reading Recovery terms, this is called the *team approach*. At the beginning of this study I talked about change across four dimensions whenever Reading Recovery is implemented in a system. The one I have been most interested in is “change in the ways teachers view children and discover ways to support them” (p. 4 of this study). How does that change take place? Perhaps relationships must be built before interactions amongst teachers can lead to change. Cathy talked about our interactions as classroom teacher and Reading Recovery teacher. She said: “*It’s important to develop a relationship other than business. I mean we need to go beyond shoptalk. You can joke and you can laugh. You share things that happen with your daughters, in your life. So when you do that, the person feels that they know you at another level, a personal level.*”

By building a relationship with the teachers with whom I work I provide an environment of trust that leads us to work together to change our students’ ways of operating in the classroom. I was pleasantly surprised when Cathy told me that my sharing

my stories about my daughters and my life in general contributed to the beginning of our relationship. I was happy because I had done that without a calculated purpose. There was no premeditation in my actions. Now I am aware that my storytelling can help build relationships too and that there is a connection between the personal and the professional.

The concept of relationship appeared in the voices of the administrators I interviewed and gave me another lens through which to look at my interactions. I interviewed two principals. When I listened to the tapes I noticed that they used the term change, as opposed to transformation. Teri Dunn is my current principal. I have written about her in my narrative about moral leadership. When I informed Teri about the confidentiality issues, she said that I could use her name. I invited her to think about her experiences with transformative learning in teachers. She talked about the two ways in which she sees teachers change. She said: *“I think influences are pivotal. Also modeling is very important. I see change in teachers go two ways. One way is that the relationships they build make them stronger and more competent. They continue to learn and grow. They become solid teachers who can help other people. That helps them change the way they view things because they have now a more global picture; they are not isolated. They cooperate with teachers at different grade levels. Another way is this. They build relationships that don’t help them grow and they become cynical.”* Teri’s statement is in agreement with Fullan’s conclusion that “collaborative cultures, which by definition have close relationships, are indeed powerful, but unless they are focusing on the right things they may end up being powerfully wrong” (p. 67).

I responded to Teri’s comment by adding that I thought her modeling was very powerful in our school. She said: *“Absolutely, that needs to happen at every level.”* I know

Teri works hard to ensure that every teacher in her school has an opportunity to develop “the right kind” of relationship.

Greg Boudreau is one of my former principals. I view him as an example of a leader who fosters collaboration and change. Presently, he is principal on secondment, in charge of Program Department. In that role, he leads a number of curriculum initiatives for the elementary panel of Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. He is also the Liaison Administrator for the Reading Recovery program. He, too, talked about change when I asked him to think about what facilitates transformative learning. Greg made an excellent point when I asked him to give me feedback about my effectiveness. He said: *“It’s hard for you to create change because there is no power involved, so you have to do it with influence. Your sense of leadership has to do with understanding where they are.”* This statement probably explains an important aspect of a transformational or change process in the education system. Its relationships are governed to some extent by the role each member of a group holds. The tone of the interaction might have different characteristics when one of the members holds a position of power.

I asked Greg to explain to me what he meant by leading with influence. He said: *“You do it with your integrity. People know that you are consistent. They know what to expect.”* The integrity of the person who expects to facilitate transformative learning is of paramount importance when a position of power is not present. Cranton (1998) says: “The group must be supportive and caring of each other, creating an atmosphere of openness and trust. As a part of the group, the educator plays a vital role in maintaining a democratic process” (p. 199). A facilitator who has integrity can achieve openness and trust. I was flattered by Greg’s comment and pleased to find out that my effort to do a good job is

noticed. Until I conducted my interviews I was not aware that others perceived my sincerity. Evans (2000) says: “transformation begins with trust” (p. 287). He adds that those who seek change must begin by asking themselves what will inspire trust. His answer is, “We admire leaders who are honest, fair, competent, and forward-looking. For ‘honest’ we may read ‘consistent’. Consistency is the lifeblood of trust” (p. 288). It is now very clear that my honesty is expressed through the consistency of my actions.

Greg also used the word integrity to explain what he meant by leading with influence. Evans explains: “Integrity is a fundamental consistency between one’s values, goals, and actions. At the simplest level it means standing for something, having a significant commitment and exemplifying this commitment in our behavior” (p. 289). All the concepts to which Evans refers remind me of the value of hope that I hold and that guides me. Fullan (2000) says: “Teachers are desperate for lifelines of hope. They understand that hope is not a promise, but they need to be reminded that they are connected to a larger purpose and to others who are struggling to make progress” (pp. 161-62). This study did just that for me. It made me feel that my purpose matched that of my colleagues, and it gave me the strength to continue.

As I conclude this chapter, I realize all I have gained as a result of my conversations with my colleagues. I have gone through an intriguing process of self-reflection while dialoguing with them. They shared with me their insights on their practice and my own. I have been made aware of the concepts I must remember when I work with colleagues. I summarize my interpretation of the data I collected as follows:

- A conversation model in teacher professional development enables the sharing of teaching stories,

- Story-telling is of paramount importance in enabling teachers' transformative practices,
- Probing, eliciting, and questioning are important within a conversation model,
- Building relationships precedes the ability to effect change,
- A facilitator of transformative learning with teachers must remain authentic and empathetic,
- A facilitator of transformative learning leads with her/his influence,
- A facilitator's integrity is essential in a transformative learning process, and
- A facilitator's value of hope is an invaluable resource in the pursuit of self- and group transformative learning.

The importance of my new insights resides in the fact that, as I came upon them, I looked at my practice in a new and refreshing way. I had a firsthand experience of the power of praise as a motivator. I feel now more compelled to continue to work to improve my practice because my participants provided invaluable feedback to me. I move now towards the conclusion of this study. In Chapter Five, I attempt to answer my research questions, I continue to reach out to my colleagues' and critical friends' voices, and examine my own transformation process.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED- NEW QUESTIONS ARE BORN

Thus I fell into surprise. No one told me to surprise myself, I might add. I came on the old and best ways of writing through ignorance and experiment and was startled when truths leaped out of bushes like quail before gunshot. I blundered into creativity as blindly as any child learning to walk and see. I learned to let my senses and my Past tell me all that was somehow true. (Dandelion Wine, Ray Bradbury, 1975, p. ix)

I conclude my study with a look into my own transformation. I come to the end with a feeling of surprise. Just as Ray Bradbury did, I journeyed through this study like a child learning to walk. I am very surprised about my newborn awareness of the concepts I found as I analyzed the data. They have been there since I started searching; I only needed to let my senses, my past, and my colleagues tell me where to look.

At the beginning of this thesis, I proposed that turning the research question around and concentrating on the *I* could be an exciting research proposition. The approach helped me examine my practice and my values. I defined my telos as a search for a voice to interact in the different contexts in which I work while maintaining my inner voice and hearing the others'. I think that I can hear my voice more clearly now.

When I began this study, my first question was: *How can I facilitate transformative learning experiences for the teachers with whom I work?* I did not see at the time how contradictory that question was. It was only when I read Carmen Shields's feedback to my first draft that I realized that there were significant limitations in such formula. They were:

1. I had not included myself in that question. When I asked whether I could facilitate transformative learning *for* them, I had positioned myself outside of the group of teachers with whom I work, and

2. When I situated myself outside of the group, it is possible that I was locating myself *above* them.

As I came upon this understanding, I realized that I had just stumbled upon one of my living contradictions. Whitehead (2000) explains: “All I am meaning by ‘I’ as a living contradiction is the experience of holding together two mutually exclusive opposite values” (p. 93). I define myself as a teacher leader who leads *with* the teachers with whom I work, but did not truly examine what I really meant by that until faced with Carmen Shields’s response to my draft. Once I saw my contradiction, I was forced to challenge my assumptions and define leading *with* as opposed to leading *alone*. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) said: “Many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them” (p. 17). As a teacher leader I hold a position of knowledge. I also hold the same experiences of the teachers with whom I interact. There lies the importance of professional development in which practitioners share their experiences with others. When I sit in a circle with my colleagues, I must remain aware of who I am as a total person. I must be willing to undergo a process of transformation myself before I can expect to facilitate it in the circle. When I say that I lead *with* teachers, I mean that I am going through a similar process and, ironically, this is what I may have forgotten when I formulated my first research question. Fullan and Hargreaves list the aspects of the total teacher. They are: “1. The teacher’s *purpose*, 2. The teacher as a *person*, 3. The real world *context* in which teachers work, 4. The *culture* of teaching: the working

relationships that teachers have with their colleagues” (p. 18). When I lead with the teachers with whom I work, I present myself as a total teacher among total teachers. When I ignore the person that I am, the context in which I work, and the working relationships I have, I am sitting in a circle of which I am not a part. Lambert (1998) says:

When we think about leadership, we are accustomed to picturing people in roles with formal authority, such as principals, vice-principals, directors or superintendents. But we can view leadership as a verb, rather than as a noun, by considering the processes, activities, and relationships in which people engage, rather than as the individual in a specific role. (p. 18)

During my 4 years as a teacher leader, no transformation has been more attainable for me than my own. This became tangible as a result of my study. Lambert (1998) defines leadership as “the reciprocal learning processes that enable participants in a community to construct meaning toward a shared purpose. Learning in this context means learning among adults in a community that shares goals and visions” (p. 18). In Lambert’s conception, leadership is seen as learning that leads to constructive change. I learn as I lead *with* the teachers with whom I work, that is, through dialogue and interaction with them. I attempt to facilitate my transformative learning and, only afterward, I may be able to do that with others.

Another important implication of my living contradiction is of a theoretical nature. If transformative learning theory implies that meaning exists within ourselves, it cannot be imposed by a facilitator. This thought led me to Ann Brooks’s (2000a) “Cultures of Transformation”. She warns: “Like any theory or practice, however, transformational

education is not neutral, objective, or value-free” (p. 162). In an effort to solve my dilemma, I turned to journal writing. My entry follows.

I have come upon a contradiction. My value of collaboration seems to be denied in my first research question. What does this mean in my practice? I believe I am very honest and forthcoming when I communicate my values to the teachers with whom I work. They know how I feel about giving children the opportunity to learn. However, am I honest about my position in the group? Do I realize that I must go through the same process of transformation with them? Obviously, when I examined my values, I omitted a look at the values I hold as a facilitator. I guess I should revisit my “list.” Perhaps the first step towards examining myself as a living contradiction involves knowing my implicit values in *all* the roles I play. Then I can begin to search for coherence. (Journal entry, April 29, 2002)

Cranton (1994) provides me with timely advice when she suggests that teachers explicitly state their values and “model questioning their own values” (p. 201). This was one of the surprising insights I gained as I worked on my study. I claimed I had a value of moral leadership, and I had not examined it. Brooks (2000a) describes the characteristics of the transformational learning process within the feminist poststructural culture. She says:

Transformation within a feminist poststructural culture occurs in a setting in which participants are heard by others, have their viewpoint and feelings understood, and feel themselves accepted and confirmed. This usually means that participants share a positionality and that large power differentials among group members do not exist. (p. 167)

I interpret this as a design where all participants are equal. Although I had not claimed otherwise, did I really mean it? She continues, “In a feminist poststructural story, transformational learning is like a social web. As the web transforms, so does each participant” (p. 167). I would not have understood this concept at the beginning of my study. I think I can see now how my transformation is part of a *learning web*. My first research question was modified because I understood that I cannot effect any change for or to people, I can only attempt to do it *with* them.

The reformulation of my question was only the beginning. As I analyzed my data I saw that all the factors or themes that emerged as facilitators of transformation applied to me as well as my colleagues.

My colleagues talked to me about the power of our conversations as a vehicle for their change. It was during my conversations with my participants that I became aware of the changes that were operating in me. Mezirow (2000) says: “transformation refers to a movement through time of reformulating reified structures of meaning by reconstructing dominant narratives. The process may itself become a frame of reference, a dispositional orientation” (p. 19). I had a personal story that needed to be restoried. Writing about my past personal and professional experiences helped me see the threads of a tapestry that was completed when I heard my colleagues. Clandinin (1993) talked about the process through which a group of people shared their stories. She said: “We began to know our own stories better by hearing others’ stories. As we listened to others’ stories, we not only heard echoes of our own stories, but saw new shades of meaning in them” (p. 2).

I realize now that my telos can be completed. My quest is to improve my interactions with teachers by listening to their voices while maintaining my own. This is not an either-or

process. My voice resurfaces as I give others the chance to use their voices. Britzman (1991) defines teaching as “a struggle for voice” (p. 23). The author says:

The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself and feeling heard by others are all a part of this struggle. While tone, accent, and style qualify meaning, meaning is never realized by the individual alone. The struggle originates with the individual, is shaped through social interaction and mediated by language. Voice suggests relationships: the individual’s relationship to the meaning of her or his lived experience and hence to language, and the individual’s relationship to the other, since understanding is a social process. (p. 23)

I finally understand why I was interested in the quality of my voice in relation to my colleagues’. I now approach my interactions with a sense that I can be heard and that I am connected to others. A discourse of possibilities opens for our education system when we see our professional community as a dialogic community. However, we cannot diminish the value of the emotional component of talk. Mezirow himself uses the term “emotional maturity” in Learning as Transformation (2000). He says: “Effective participation in discourse and in transformative learning requires emotional maturity - awareness, empathy, and control, knowing and managing one’s emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships - as well as clear thinking” (p. 11). Although Mezirow talks about the importance of knowing how to handle relationships, Taylor (1997) argues that Mezirow “has tended to overlook the more subjective elements of relationships (trust, friendship, support) and their impact on transformative learning” (p. 6). In Chapter Four, I attempted to convey the importance my participants placed on relationship building.

Taylor continues by sharing some of his findings. He says: “This review found these elements of relationships to be the most common findings among all studies” (p. 6). I am pleased that my study adds to those interpretations, even if in a small way.

When I return to my conversations with my colleagues I realize that, as I worked on this study, one of the most powerful moments in my process of transformation happened when I heard that my empathy and ability to listen are an asset. Not only did this empower me to continue on that route; it became an opportunity to give a different tone to my childhood memories of a family where silence was predominant. I see my ability to listen and empathize as two qualities that strengthen me. The initial void caused by the lack of dialogue is gone.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) explain:

‘Really talking’ requires careful listening; it implies a mutually shared agreement that together you are creating the optimum setting so that half-baked or emergent ideas can grow. Conversation, as constructivists describe it, includes discourse and exploration, talking and listening, questions, argument, speculation, and sharing.(p. 144)

I certainly feel that I was immersed in real talk throughout my study. I shared parts of my conversations with my colleagues and went through a true process of emancipatory education. Mezirow (1990b) explains that “emancipatory education is an organized effort to help the learner challenge presuppositions, explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new perspectives” (p. 18). That is the challenge now. Will I act on these new acquired perspectives? Taylor (1997) claims that “accompanying this change in meaning perspective, there is also an increase in self-confidence in new roles

and relationships” (p. 6). I have begun to notice an increased self-confidence and a feeling of “being at ease with myself.” Ettling (2002) talks about her view of transformative learning in her praxis not as

an insight or as a primarily logical comprehension, but as an evolving process that demands internal commitment and ongoing support....The participants in our inquiry have coined the term “continuum of empowerment” to describe how they experience their own growth and their personal process of change. (p. 2)

Ettling’s continuum of empowerment reminds me of my “journey of becoming.” I said before that as soon as I have become, I embark on a new journey of improvement. I add now that as I do this, I feel stronger. When I feel empowered, I continue. This metaphor reflects the action research cycle as well. Perhaps the next section will be an indication of where I am headed in my search.

How Can I Improve My Practice?

My quest for improvement constitutes the core of this study. I said before that I see this process as a continuum. Although I begin now a new process of improvement, I have reached a meaningful point where I have become aware of ways in which I can improve my practice. I follow Mezirow (2000) who says: “reflective discourse and its resulting insight alone do not make for transformative learning. Acting upon these emancipatory insights, a praxis, is also necessary” (pp. 354-355). Before I began the interview process, I predicted that it would be difficult for people to tell me about my negative traits. The teachers with whom I work have a great deal of experience in sharing the positive. I was concerned that they might be reluctant to point out deficiencies. I decided to ask the question in two ways. I

began with a direct request: “tell me what I can do better.” Marian told me she did not like a continuing contact session when all the items on the agenda were not covered. We were supposed to discuss a chapter in “Becoming Literate: The construction of inner control” by Marie Clay (1991), which presents the author’s theory of early literacy acquisition. Marian said: *“I know it’s hard because the conversation is important but, for instance, we had an assignment for a session, and we didn’t do it because you let the conversation continue. Maybe your tone of voice needs to be firmer when you have to end a discussion.”* I am pleased that Marian shared this observation with me. Not only did she feel comfortable to provide her feedback, but also she reminded me of an important point. It is called balance. Marian is in her second year as a Reading Recovery teacher. Other teachers in her continuing contact group have a few years of experience. She was eager to be part of a theoretical discussion because this becomes a focus after the training year. I need to keep a balance between the sharing of our teaching stories and theoretical discussions, because teachers in continuing contact groups have various levels of experience and different needs.

I shared this observation with Alida, and she pointed out that it is important for the teacher leader to know where *“she wants the discussion to go.”* She added: *“You know that you have to bring it all back together. Because otherwise, sharing is great, but if there’s nowhere to go, then there is no validity. For me, for instance, I have to come away thinking that I learned something.”* This is another important point for me to remember. The teachers with whom I work do feel empowered by their knowledge. Our sessions should provide them with the access to knowledge as a possible vehicle for transformative practices to occur.

This exercise taught me to question in a way that encourages people to offer feedback. Questions that include an impersonal statement such as “what gets in the way” might provide an honest yet respectful tone. There is so much I can do to improve my questioning skills. Another exciting challenge has just been presented for me.

Teri and Greg gave me an administrator’s point of view. Rather than pointing out a deficiency, Teri stressed what I must remember. She said: “*Continue to lead by example. When teachers see your dedication to your work, they listen.*” I asked Greg what I need to work on; he said: “*I’ll tell you what you do well. You question very well and you listen well. You respond with empathy for the person.*” It is not only important to know how to foster reflection; it is essential to understand how people feel and what they are going through.

My conclusion at this point is that no change can come about in an environment where there is no mutual understanding. Again, it was through the feedback I sought that I realized a quality I seem to possess. It has been pointed out to me that I listen well. In fact, I can extract that attribute from my personal stories. While I was writing my story *Two Journeys on One Flight* (Chapter One) I realized that I had always been a good listener in my parents’ home. I reflected on my role of interpreter in a family dynamics where gestures often replaced dialogue. I carry this quality with me. Perhaps what I always viewed as a void has given me the capability to show empathy. It is true that I can understand where people come from and how they feel. Empathy involves listening well, with no biases or preconceptions. This thought has finally reconciled me with aspects of my past that I used to perceive as negative. Once again, the story is restored. Clandinin (1993) says: “when we write down the stories we have lived in this inquiry, it is to record for ourselves the new stories we have learned to live and tell” (p. 13).

I asked Greg, one more time, whether he could pinpoint areas where I could improve. He responded with a question: “*What do you think?*”. I think this is a good example of how transformative learning can be facilitated. By fostering self-reflection, Greg allowed me to identify a weak area and, once I verbalized it, he provided invaluable advice.

I answered Greg’s question by sharing that I struggle with the problem of time constraints. For instance, after my sessions with teachers, I always feel that something important was left out. His response was: “*Well, when you are working with a group, you have to remember where you are at that particular point in time; other things will be covered later, but at that moment, one person’s needs might need to be addressed.*” This comment gives me a great deal of insight. To improve my practice, I must maintain a balance between what needs to be covered and people’s needs. I must remain flexible and responsive to the group’s needs.

More important, when Greg gave me feedback on my struggle with time constraints, he caused me to think further. Reflection on practice can be done at any one point in time without losing sight of the whole. When reflection concentrates on a particular moment, I may become shortsighted. From now on, when I reflect on my work with teachers, I will include a look at past interactions and the possibilities for the future. The metaphor of the “journey of becoming” that I used before will help me in my interactions with my colleagues.

The most powerful example Teri and Greg gave me was about ways to reflect with teachers one-on-one. When I reflect on my interaction with an individual teacher, I will ask myself where this person is in her professional growth and how this person can continue to develop, keeping in mind that each person changes at a different pace. A comment about

what the person does well may give a teacher this sense of becoming as a journey that I so embrace now. How useful it would be to ask my colleague about the area that she wants to work on as opposed to imposing my idea of what she/he needs to work on. I know the question Greg asked me made me feel in charge of my learning.

Just as I said at the beginning, I was hoping that this study would add to a discourse of possibilities for the teaching profession. I see now how this discourse of possibilities applies to my practice and that of my colleagues. The value of hope that sustains my teaching of children can and must guide my work with teachers. I think of Van Manen's (1990) quote (Chapter One). The "language of aims and objectives" that he sees as an impediment is the same language that can hinder transformative learning in teachers. I become caught up in unreasonable expectations when I assume that every teacher will reach the same level of understanding at any one point in time, or that all the points on an agenda will be covered at every session, or when I expect perfection of myself as a facilitator. Brooks (2000b) says: "the transformational process is achieved through conversation. As we listen to others' experiences, we develop not only a better understanding of their experiences, but a new understanding of our own" (p. 167).

It was through my conversations with my participants that I began to think about my expectations of myself. As Van Manen beautifully explains: "As teachers we tend to close ourselves off from possibilities that lie outside the direct or indirect field of vision of the expectations" (1990, p. 123). A plethora of possibilities appear in my reflection now. I look to my values next for they remind me of my purpose as an educator.

My Critical Friends' View of My Values

At the beginning, I asked myself: *How can I live out my values in my practice?* I do not expect to have a definite answer to this question because becoming aware of our own biases is a life-long endeavor. However, it was enlightening to see this process begin in my study. As I said before, I asked my critical friends to tell me whether they could find evidence in my stories that I live out my values in my practice. Suzanne said: *“In Pedro’s story, you certainly show how important it is to keep trying when problems with children seem insurmountable and to remain hopeful until we find the ‘keys to success’ and ‘the road to happiness’ for each child. I think that, even if you had not found those animal stories that Pedro loved, you would not have given up until you had found some other way for him to experience success. You expect that of yourself, that’s what you’re good at, and that’s what makes each day rewarding for you.”*

Suzanne’s encouraging words are the thrust I need to continue “to hope.” Peggy, on the other hand, makes me aware of how much deeper I can go in my reflection. She said: *“Seeing Pedro’s special interest made Pedro feel accepted by you, and this, in turn gave him the confidence to share that interest with the rest of his ‘world.’ His teacher was able to carry this into the classroom and encourage Pedro to shine! I wonder if she too, had a love of animals. You know that I do! I know that when children show an interest in art or animals, I am immediately drawn to them, because these are two of my passions. I guess this is a bias that I am working on. Would I feel the same way if the child showed an interest in machines, for example? I guess the point I’m trying to make is that encouraging “uniqueness” in our students is an important, yet challenging, aspect of teaching. When we can do it, we see the results.”*

Peggy helped unveil a possible bias. I certainly love animals. It is not hard for me to relate to a child who shares that interest with me. Can I encourage a child who loves machines, for instance? My interactions with my friends propel me to continue to work with my students and teachers with the hope that we can all transform our practices. It also gives me the fuel to continue to engage in reflection on my biases. In the future, I will be examining the way I encourage children whose interests do not match mine. I will look for signs that I can foster their growth in the same way I fostered Pedro's. In my work with teachers, I will observe how I interact with them when they do not show the signs of growth I would "expect" them to display.

My Own Transformative Learning as Revealed in One Story

Denis Maika was my principal for 6 years. He has been the facilitator of a great deal of my professional development. I shared a story with him and asked him to tell me his view of those years. I called my story, "My Sparkling Event". I learned to think about an episode as a "sparkling event" while taking Narrative (Education 5V06) with Susan Drake and Anne Elliott. This term refers to the idea of capturing an event during which we find ourselves acting in a unique way. This is a way in which we have not felt we are capable of behaving. Recalling this story can be a vehicle for transformation, as we can begin to use it as a model in future situations. Parry and Doan (1994) say: "If narrative is truly fundamental to the way humans organize and give meaning to experience, it would probably be fair to say that an event only becomes an experience by being narrated" (p. 24). They add that narrative is "the master code by which a person interprets the text of her/his life in order to give it meaning. But since a person's life connects with the lives of so many others, her/his stories

are, more precisely, the code according to which the person deciphers the meaning of life as text” (p. 24). The story follows.

My sparkling event

In 1990, a new principal came to my school. An amazing journey of inquiry and growth began as a result of his leadership. It was my second year as a teacher in Canada, and I still felt quite overwhelmed. Although I didn’t know it, during my first year I had gained a solid reputation as a hardworking and efficient teacher. When my new principal introduced himself, he said, “there has been a dog fight around here to see who got to keep you.” Rather than making me feel confident, this comment meant more pressure to do well. I worked as hard as I could and became part of every initiative he proposed to the staff, in a quiet and unassuming way. I could have defined myself as an accommodating, nice teacher who could take on challenges.

The next 4 years were exciting in many ways. Peer-coaching situations, group inquiry sessions, workshops, summer institutes, informal discussions, were the way he opened the door to my professional growth. I was soon going to find out that no one could help me with my personal growth, unless I took the initiative.

In the fourth year of my work with him, the primary division embarked on a quest for improved student achievement in the area of literacy acquisition. Denis found out about Reading Recovery. We spent the next few months thinking about it. That summer, I was asked to investigate one part of its underlying theory. We were to share our findings with the rest of the division, and together we were to come up with a plan. Soon, I decided that I really wanted to be a Reading Recovery teacher.

Nothing interested me more than issues of early literacy. It almost felt like fate had placed me where I was.

That school year, we collaborated around classroom programs and Reading Recovery. Following my “model of the world” I worked harder than ever, tacitly expecting that my efforts would result in my being chosen as one of the Reading Recovery teachers in the system.

That spring, I found out that I had not been chosen to train as a Reading Recovery teacher. At the time, I interpreted my principal’s decision as his belief that I was not worthy of such position. My whole structure came tumbling down. I had convinced myself that if I worked hard and did a good job, I would be rewarded. I was truly devastated. I did not know what direction to take next. Maybe I was not a good teacher. Discouragement dominated me, and I lacked direction for quite a few weeks. There was no doubt in my mind about the quality of the teachers who had been chosen, so I had to infer that I was a poor teacher. On the other hand, my intuition told me that I wasn’t so bad. Perhaps I hadn’t been able to communicate what I could do....

Towards the end of the school year, Denis came to talk to me. In a nonapologetic way, he said that he saw me doing a strong job at the classroom level, as part of his project. At that point, I think I did something that paved the way for a dramatic change. After listening to his rationale, I asked him to consider me for a grade 1 position, because that would be the ideal grade to implement a very strong reading and writing program. I told him that even though he was leaving, I would love to continue working with him and asked him to keep me in mind for a position

as a Reading Recovery teacher anywhere in the Board. I petitioned and elaborated a plan to move forward. That was change because, by envisioning a way out of my feeling of discouragement, I was taking charge of my own actions.

The next year, Denis moved to his new position at the Board and began the piloting of Reading Recovery and the Balanced Literacy program. I had an opportunity to teach grade 1 for the first time. It was a wonderful year. My work and research were more than appreciated. I implemented the Balanced Literacy program in my classroom. I became the leader in my division and received visits from teachers and administrators from all over my board, who came to see my program, invited by my principal. He invited me to give workshops at many schools. We would go together. He talked about Reading Recovery, and I talked about my experience with the implementation of the Balanced Literacy program in my classroom.

The following year, I moved to another school where there was a strong collaboration model. My program became stronger and my sharing with other people broader. My summer institute was the most popular that year. I learned many things about myself and about working with teachers. For instance, I learned that I was strong at linking practice and theory and that teachers responded well to that model. I also learned that teachers like to learn from their peers, because they know that the talk comes from someone who is “in the same boat.” Still, my plan was to attain one goal only. I wanted to become a Reading Recovery teacher. I was doing all the right things now, and still did not see the wished results. Why was the plan not working again?

One day, I was sharing my first draft of an agenda for a summer institute with Denis. In the middle of our conversation, he suggested I train as a First Steps trainer. I heard myself saying, “no, thank you, I am not interested.” I couldn’t believe I had done that. I had spent 2 years “demonstrating” that I was a good teacher with leadership qualities and tried every possible route. The thought of rejecting an initiative was not part of my old model. Obviously, something was changing.

Soon after, my Board decided to train a second Reading Recovery teacher leader. When I saw the posting I decided that this was my last chance. Self-doubt entered my mind, but I kept going. I prepared for that interview for 3 months. My demonstration of expertise and ability had to be impeccable, for I knew there were many good people out there. I wrote a report of the action research I had done in my classroom, trying to answer the question: Can I show change over time in every one of my students’ literacy acquisition? That report, videotaping of my classes, and summer institute sessions, etc. were part of a professional/personal portfolio that contained demonstration of my growth.

My interview was successful. I became a Reading Recovery teacher of children and a teacher leader. The full-time training at OISE was “ninth heaven.” I had finally fulfilled my dream. At least I thought I had. In reality, new challenges were awaiting and, until I sat down to write my story, I did not think about the possibilities in it.

As I wrote this piece, I realized that in the past, I had reflected on the challenges of my professional life in a way that negated my strengths. This story helped me see how the

events depicted in it can become “experience” (Parry & Doan, 1994, p. 24) because when I recount them, they become real to me. I can give this story a meaning that can help me respond in situations that may seem negative at first sight.

In my past, I identified myself with a narrative in which I appear silent, docile, and forever compromising. What if the following were true: “the narrative thread with which we elect to identify ourselves is the only code we have any longer for that purpose, and only to the extent that we intentionally embrace such stories as our own” (Parry & Doan, p. 25). In that case, I could construct a model in which I remain compassionate (as opposed to *nice*), flexible (as opposed to *accommodating*), and assertive (as opposed to *silent*). How liberating it would be to make this the text of my life.

Denis read this story and said: *“The deeper conclusion that I draw is that you are a very hopeful person. Your hopefulness leads you to develop new strategies. Do I relate to the truth and facts stated in your reflection.... Most certainly! It is a life story of personal ‘stick-with-it-ness.’ The end product was always the connectedness of you to others...either students (and I imagine their parents) and other professionals. The other thread that I see is almost a blind infatuation with an idea...called becoming a Reading Recovery teacher. It would be most interesting to see what you think once the infatuation period ended. I get the sense that once you began studying at OISE, you soon found out that your paradigm of hard work and stick-with-it-ness didn’t always work. So, maybe you learned that the journey of becoming (the fun of learning new things), coupled with your hopefulness and your ability to vision the end product (even if it wasn’t immediately attainable), allowed you to continue.” Finally, I reflect upon your ability to make a commitment, and come ‘hell or high water’ you*

are able to remain faithful...even if you see yourself as not immediately successful. I guess what I am saying is that I view your story as one of transformational leadership.”

Denis’ statements contain elements that I extract from the definitions of hope I provided in this study. They are: the ability to develop new strategies when obstacles are encountered, and the “stick-with-it-ness” that allows the person to act “as if” the goal can be reached. Again, I was very pleased to see that Denis saw me as a hopeful person and, especially, that he saw signs of “transformational leadership” in my story. I agree with Parry and Doan that my story became my experience after I wrote it and shared it. It was at that point, more than 5 years later, that I realized that there was transformation in it. This is also one more example of the value of narrative and of the truth behind the statement “journey of becoming.” I can use this story as a model for my transformation because I wrote it and shared with a critical friend who validated my insights.

Everything Changes When I Change

Another point in my own transformation process took place when I perceived the others differently as a result of my turning the research question around and focusing on the *I*.

It was during a Continuing Contact session. I was guiding the discussion after the two lessons behind the one-way screen. The two teachers who had taught were listening to feedback about their teaching. I realized that I could see the growth that had taken place in two of the teachers I had trained the year before. It was a very empowering feeling at the time. I clearly felt that because I had devoted time to improve myself, it was easier to see

how others had grown. This insight caused me to focus on the role of the facilitator of transformative learning. Cranton (1998) says,

self-awareness about our practice, making our own assumptions explicit, engaging in critical reflection on our practice, talking to others about our practice, and continually questioning and revising our theory of practice are the crucial elements in our role (Cranton 1994; 1996). It is not a matter of choosing the right method or stance, but rather a matter of ceaseless, critical self-reflection. (p. 198)

This quote summarizes the process that I began as I worked on this study. I am extremely happy about my choice to look inward into my practice, as this has facilitated my journey towards my transformative practice. I intend to continue this cycle of constant examination. This insight explains, one more time, the reason for the formulation of my research question as facilitating transformative learning experiences *with* my colleagues rather than *for* or *to* them.

Finally, in terms of the theory of transformative learning I feel now that I have gone through the process so well explained by Cranton. She says:

Human beings have three basic interests: (1) controlling the environment (technical interests), (2) understanding each other (practical interests), and (3) becoming free from self- and social distortions (emancipatory interests). Learning in the emancipatory domain is transformative, but this learning can, in turn, influence our knowledge in the other two domains. (1998, p. 198)

The idea for this study was conceived in my mind soon after I began my Master of Education studies. At that time, I was concerned about teachers' understandings of how children learn to read and write. That was a technical interest. When I presented a plan for

my data collection process, my interest in understanding others led me to seek conversations with them through interviews, critical friends' feedback, and e-mail correspondence. That was a practical interest. Yet it was only when I looked at my perceptions of myself that I began to emancipate myself from the distortion between my espoused and implicit values. At that point, I began a process of transformative learning that might assist me in pursuing my interests in the other two areas.

This study has been extremely instrumental in my own life. I suggest that this model of conducting action research with the *I* at the centre of inquiry and with a strong narrative component constitutes a great tool to facilitate transformative learning in the educational field.

Levels of Transformative Learning

I said at the beginning of Chapter Four that I was aware of the difficulty of finding words to explain what others said. When I reread Denise Paquette-Frenette's feedback to the last draft of my study, I realized that I had used different terms to explain what I was observing. While my question for study referred to facilitating transformative learning experiences with others, when I looked outwards, I talked about transformative learning and transformative practice as if they were the same things. Sometimes, I used the word transformation as well. Are there differences? What am I discussing when I use those terms? Denise Paquette-Frenette's comments challenged more uncovered assumptions. After rereading the theory and my notes again, I arrived at some distinctions and attempted to differentiate the terms transformative practice, transformative learning, change, and transformation.

What is the difference between transformative practice and transformative learning?

When I refer to transformative practice in teaching, I think of *something* the teacher does, or an *action* she takes, that is perceived by her as very different from prior teaching decisions or behaviours. It probably happens after a process of transformative learning has taken place. Through this process, the teacher has revised her views or meaning perspectives about a child, her/his potential for learning based on, among other reasons, environmental, cultural, health, and prior ability to learn. She has also challenged her own assumptions about theory, systemic implementation issues, her ability to help the child untangle a confusion and go from a passive to an active approach to learning, and her own capacity for undertaking new learning. It seems to me as though the novel teaching decisions that I call transformative practices in teaching are the external manifestation that transformative learning may have occurred.

The word change also appears in my conversations with administrators. This might reveal how their view directs them to concentrate on modifying conditions at a system level. I think of Fullan's (2001b) distinction between theories of change and theories of changing (Chapter One). He talks about theories of changing as the ones that explain how to influence the causes of change. If transformation is personal and change is systemic, it would be very powerful to facilitate change at the educator's personal level in order to facilitate change at a system level. Cranton (1998) writes about the power of the learning group to facilitate transformative learning. She says:

The process of transformative learning varies from individual to individual, based on the preferences of psychological types, learning styles, or other personal attributes.

For all learners, though, dialogue and discussion with others is critical. A learning

group helps us to question and challenge our assumptions, values and perspectives.

This means that the group must be supportive and caring of each other, creating an atmosphere of openness and trust. (p. 199)

I propose here that we focus on the power of the learning group to effect change in education. This learning group acts before, during, and after people attend conferences and listen to presentations. It is not enough to listen to the experts' ideas. It is not enough to develop policy and declare that the expectations are high without placing an emphasis on change at the teacher level as well. This implies placing teachers at the centre of their own learning and situating the facilitators or instructors at the same level. Teri Dunn and Greg Boudreau are aware of the importance of allowing every teacher to change. As they look at the system and work towards changing it for the better, they are providing the conditions for each teacher to improve her/his practice.

In my study I have also used the term transformation. I say that there is transformation when the being that I am has changed. It can be explained as follows: I was one person before, I am *another* now. I am thinking about a personal change that means I have modified the view I have about my self. If that change takes place, it would probably alter the way I teach as well, but the personal change precedes the shift in teaching.

The questions are now, can I provide examples of instances in which the teachers I interviewed have made a shift that can be defined as transformative learning or practice? And may I say that I *can* facilitate transformative learning with the teachers with whom I work?

I am tempted to assert that when Suzanne reflected on how reading my story propelled her to think about her values, she was probably going through a process where she

was revising her assumptions and even trying to determine what assumptions she had. This is probably a process towards transformative learning. And when Peggy talked about her process of accepting herself in her uniqueness and in turn accepting her students in all their diversity, she was probably providing a very powerful example of personal transformation that leads to transformative practice in teaching. However, I believe now that only they are in a position to define their processes as transformative. I can not appropriate those statements and name them transformative learning.

The next examples I extract from this study probably constitute instances of transformative practice:

- A child who is hard to teach finishes the Reading Recovery program to the surprise of the teacher (Marian),
- A teacher makes a teaching decision and realizes later that sharing the problem helped her do that (Alida),
- A teacher transfers the learning to a different situation and notices that her practice has improved (Nicole), and
- A principal notices how teachers change their views as a result of collaborating with colleagues (Teri Dunn).

These examples seem to signal times when practices have been transformed. Nonetheless, are they examples of transformative learning? Maybe, but the problem is, only those who have had those experiences can reflect upon the learning that took place. And only they can define that learning as transformative. It is possible that such statements cannot be made outside of the knower, and it is admissible that she or he may not realize that this particular type of learning has taken place. Perhaps this refers to Taylor's (1997)

finding as a result of his review of empirical studies, that a factor of a holistic interpretation of transformative learning is nonconscious learning, or unconscious knowing. He explains this concept as “learning that takes place outside of one’s focal awareness” (p. 8). It is possible that teachers (I include myself in this group) have had many experiences of transformative learning of which they are not aware. If transformative learning refers to a process that may go beyond conscious reasoning, attempting to obtain answers in this area through a single interview would be difficult.

I have spent a great deal of time trying to find out whether I can facilitate transformative learning with the teachers with whom I work. By facilitation, I mean that I provide (or do I?) the environment that allows both of us to go through a process through which we revise our meaning perspectives in education. I think I can affirm that I have seen reflected in my study some of the conditions necessary for transformative learning to be facilitated. Yet, when I say that I have seen something, I am not claiming that I can explain the theory of transformative learning in general terms. I come back to Whitehead (1989) here. He says: “The kind of theory I have in mind forms part of the educational practices of the individuals concerned. It is not a theory which can be constituted into a propositional form. It is a description and explanation of practice which is part of the living form of the practice itself” (p. 5). Therefore, all I am saying is that I have arrived at some conclusions because I have looked at my practice through my colleagues’ lenses and my own, that is, through dialogue. It was through those conversations that my theory of practice came about. In that sense, I believe that my participants and I share this theory. Yet, my living theory will change as I continue my practice.

Whitehead says, “I am suggesting that a form of question and answer can also show how to incorporate insights in the conceptual terms of the traditional forms of knowledge whilst acknowledging the existence of ourselves as living contradictions as we refer to the records of our practice” (p. 5).

The following are some insights that may refer to a more general theory. The importance of self-reflection (Mezirow, 1991, 2000) as a narrative process (Brooks, 2000b) has been brought to surface in this study. Cranton’s (1994) points about the importance of the educator’s careful questioning, probing, and modeling to facilitate self-reflection have been mentioned too. Taylor (1997), who summarized the results of various empirical studies, noticed that the essential role of context and relationships, where the personal intertwines with the professional, came to the forefront on more than one occasion. Finally, the conclusions at which I arrived at the end of Chapter Four could constitute examples of the conditions for the facilitation of transformative learning with the teachers with whom I work (Cranton 1994, 1998).

As I began this section I asked myself, how could I attempt to show evidence of transformative learning in other people when I have a hard time articulating my own? However, as I reflect upon my own process of transformation, I see examples of that in my personal life and in my professional life. I also see elements of the general theory here. Taylor (1997) found that most of the studies he reviewed confirmed the model outlined by Mezirow (1991) to explain the process of perspective transformation. Taylor summarizes the process as follows,

It is often illustrated as a linear, though not always step-wise, process beginning with a disorienting dilemma followed by a self-examination of feelings, critical reflection,

exploring and planning new roles, negotiating relationships, building confidence, and developing a more inclusive and discriminating perspective. (p. 3)

My father's death was only the beginning of the process for me. The notes he left for us triggered the need to understand. I think of that as a true disorienting dilemma in Mezirow's (1991) terms. My realization, upon the conclusion of my study, that my ability to listen and my empathy were good qualities that I probably learned as I grew up led to my perspective transformation. That is, the silence that I had viewed as a void became a positive influence in my life. Finally, my surprise at my critical friends' written feedback made me reflect upon the importance I placed on those notes, and that led me to revisit and rescue my relationship with my father.

I am convinced that the context in which I reflected upon my father's notes and their meaning facilitated my transformation process. I concur with Taylor's (1997) summary that "the immediate and historical context surrounding the life crisis" (p. 4) contributed to the resolution of my dilemma. My trip to Argentina allowed me to read the notes, but more important, when I read them I was surrounded by a history filled with images, smells, and memories that gave a unique content to my dilemma. The flight back to Canada forced me to face my two realities, and those contrasting contexts furthered my need to understand. My Master's studies gave me the opportunity to share my stories with people who have proven to be instrumental in my learning process. Did I do it alone? The only answer is, certainly not. Taylor suggests that, according to the studies he reviewed, the importance of context in transformative learning could explain "why some disorienting dilemmas lead to a perspective transformation and others do not" (p. 9).

In my professional transformation I see other elements of the theory of transformative learning. I was elated when I noticed change in others as a result of my concentrating on my own practice. It is possible that my insight in that respect refers to Taylor's (1997) "collective unconscious" (p. 8), which he explains as falling "within the realm of looking beyond the self and recognizing others" (p. 8). I can only explain it as follows: At some point in my study, I came out of my inward look and saw my colleagues in a different light. At that point, I saw that I had changed as a teacher leader. Another encouraging point in my process towards transformative learning took place when I realized that others perceive my honesty and empathy. It made me feel recognized and empowered to continue to work towards improving my practice.

Finally, my narratives about my past and my present teaching experiences helped me visualize and articulate my values of hope and caring. As I did that, I understood that the reason why I teach children who find learning difficult is in my story, and that, in turn, gave me the energy to proceed.

It is hard to conclude this section, for there is no end in sight. These last thoughts constitute just a piece of the puzzle that represents my living educational theory, which I am putting to the test now. Will others agree with me? As Whitehead (1989) says:

I am proposing a view of educational theory as a dynamic and living form whose content changes with the developing public conversations of those involved in its creation. The theory is located not solely within these accounts but in the relationship between the account and the practice. In being generated from the practices of individuals it has the capacity to relate directly to those practices. (p. 7)

The Future

At last, I turn to the future. I begin a new inquiry process in which I ask myself: How can I continue to walk this path of transformational leadership? The concept of transformational leadership was pointed out to me by one of my critical friends. Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) say: “transformational leadership entails not only a change in the purposes and resources of those involved in the leader-follower relationships, but an elevation of both – a change ‘for the better’” (p. 28). I prefer not to use the term follower. As I said before, I see myself in the future as leading *with* my colleagues, in the sense that I learn as I lead. Perhaps another way to see this change for the better is by looking at the concept of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) said: “if one is servant, either leader or follower, one is always searching, listening, expecting that a better wheel for these times is in the making” (p. 9). This concept is appealing because it stresses the idea of serving as the primary goal of a leader. When I lead with the help of my colleagues, and when I attempt to facilitate transformative learning experiences with them, I become a servant leader as well. Greenleaf explains that becoming a natural servant demands a “long arduous discipline of learning to listen” (p. 17). Again, what I perceived in the past as a metaphor that helped me define my telos resurfaces in the theory. My interest in the quality of my interactions will continue to be prevalent as I engage in this new cycle of self-reflection. Greenleaf posed some interesting questions that might propel this new spiral. He said:

Most of us at one time or another would like to communicate, really get through to a significant level of meaning in the hearer’s experience. The best test of whether we are communicating at this depth is to ask ourselves first: Are we really listening? Are

we listening to the one we want to communicate to? Is our basic attitude one of wanting to understand? (p. 17)

My stories and my study helped me to see that I can understand the other. The question remains though: Will I have the energy to proceed? Sergiovanni (1992) says: “servant leadership is the means by which leaders can get the necessary legitimacy to lead. Servant leadership provides legitimacy partly because one of the responsibilities of leadership is to give a sense of direction, to establish an overarching purpose” (pp. 124-125). The ideas of giving a sense of direction and the ability to establish an overarching purpose remind me of the concepts of hope I have shared in previous chapters. My hope propels me to act in ways that would cause change “for the better.” Fullan (2001a) defines the characteristics of leaders in a culture of change. He says about those traits, “I have labeled (them) *the energy-enthusiasm -hopefulness* constellation” (p. 7). It is exciting to see the concept of hope in Fullan’s research because it matches my interest in that concept.

On finishing my study, I take with me a belief that teachers may be able to facilitate their transformative learning, in part, by finding spaces to talk about their past, to share their stories, and to hear their colleagues’ stories. Nonetheless, much more needs to be done in order to effect change, and I have just begun to touch the surface. Fullan (2001a) asserts that there are reasons why change occurs as it does. He says: “leadership is difficult in a culture of change because disequilibrium is common (and valuable, provided that patterns of coherence can be fostered)” (p. 6). Many questions remain unanswered in this area. Perhaps I will reach a deeper understanding when I begin a new process of becoming and learn as I go. A new question with the *I* at the centre is taking shape. However, the underlying purpose

of looking at my values will remain intact. Sergiovanni (1992) sets the tone for my next quest when he says:

We need to be in touch with our basic values and with our connections to others. In other words, we must become more authentic with ourselves and others. If we are successful, we will be able to transform schools from ordinary organizations into learning communities. (p. 29)

Conclusion

When people author their own stories, they clearly express their own moral perspective; they honor their own thinking, feeling, and doing with respect to what is right and wrong; they assume responsibility for their own moral actions; and they express their own sense of identity and authenticity. (Parry and Doan, 1994, p. 46)

The journey towards transformation never ends. I get to this point with the feeling that I can hear my voice among the voices of many others. The voices of the past keep me company. The negative echoes that floated in the air have turned into positive ones. I have learned to see my story in a way that helps me continue. The voices of the present have given me a strength I did not expect to gain from this study. I found answers when I looked inward and was enlightened by what I heard when I looked outward towards the theory, my colleagues, my friends, and my professors.

I am thankful for the opportunity I have had to hear my colleagues' stories and to share my own. I end with the conviction that I must continue this journey of writing my stories in order to examine my values. I must also remain mindful of my connections to the

people around me. My value of caring in education will guide me because as Sergiovanni (1994) affirms: “Caring is an end in itself. We care because it is good to care. But in schools as purposeful communities, caring must also be demonstrated in substantive ways that translate into student learning” (p. 145). Lastly, I hope for a future where our education system will be able to provide every child with the opportunity to succeed and every teacher to author her/his own stories. Perhaps on that day, the children will give accounts of hope, justice and achievement.

Epilogue

New Beginnings

Our voice is always contingent upon shifting relationships among the words we speak, the practices we construct, and the community within which we interact. As practices, perspectives, and communities shift, so too does the voice we use to name them. (Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach. Deborah P. Britzman, 1991, p. 12)

I finish my study with a feeling that I am beginning a new path. It is not easy to close this chapter. Just as Hannah, in The English Patient (see quote at beginning of Chapter One), I have been immersed in the lives of others and my own in a unique way. I realize I have now the memories and tools to search for new relationships and meanings through which my voice will change again.

I end with a journal entry I wrote after my last meeting with Susan Drake, Carmen Shields, and Denise Paquette-Frenette.

Just two days ago the structure of my understandings was shaken again. As Susan, Carmen, and Denise shared their feedback of my final draft with me, I realized that they were posing new questions for which I did not have answers. As we interacted, new insights popped into my mind. I knew that they were being conceived, although I could not yet articulate them. “That is part of the learning I acquired throughout my study,” I thought. I have learned to realize when a new concept is developing. I have grown accustomed to nurturing the idea by thinking about it more, by writing and sharing the incomplete thoughts. I have experienced that, as I come up with the words to roughly explain what I am thinking, and as I listen to the others’ interpretations of what I am communicating, a new awareness is born. As a result of this study, I have now direct knowledge of the power of sharing personal and professional stories. If I were to begin this research again, I could tell stories I have omitted this time. I wonder why I didn’t write about my grandparents whom I loved so much. I see now that 10 years ago I would not have been able to write about my beginnings in Canada, for the feelings were too raw then. Are there stories waiting somewhere until I am ready to tell them?

I wonder too what stories might emerge as others interact with my text. I hope this speaks of new beginnings for others as well as for me. I ponder whether my explanation of my in-the-making living educational theory will match that of others or whether I will face disagreement. When I think about the future, uncertainty reigns. I am not certain of the words I will use to propose my next research question. Maxine Greene says in the Foreword to Britzman (1991): “There is no final solution; there is no packageable remedy. There is only more and more

critical reading of the texts of actions, the texts of practice, the texts of learning to learn” (p. x).

As I listened to my professors’ feedback and tried to clarify my own thinking, I felt closer to the colleagues who shared their thoughts with me. The very dialogue I was having made me feel empowered because I knew that looking at my contradictions will help me grow as a person and a teacher. I began my study proposing that educators engage in a discourse of possibilities rather than deficiencies. At the time, I was thinking about the children with whom I work. Later, I saw how that proposition is applicable to a discourse about teacher learning. Now, I envision how this is a proposition about living. I hope this study will propel others to ask themselves questions for which there are no easy answers. Probably, these are the questions that Maxine Greene defines as “questions about teacher education that seem fresh and new” (p. xi). And as she concludes, “they may become questions about the meaning of dialogic understanding; they may become questions about open possibilities” that may assist teachers “to confront the contradiction and the tension” (p. xi). (Journal entry, May 23, 2002)

The tone of my last meeting with my professors felt positive and refreshing because, as I listened and responded, I thought of ways to overcome the difficulties. Shade (2001) explains that “surveying and imagining alternate possibilities increases our ability to revise, and so realize our hopes. Indeed, hoping itself *is* an orientation toward possibilities” (p. 61). I am confident that my study has given me the opportunity to show that hopeful teaching may indeed be the answer to overcoming difficult times in education.

Perhaps one of the most important insights I take from my research is that I must find strength in my past stories before I attempt to envision a brighter future. Shade (2001) reminds me that “though hoping promises to deliver us from current conditions, we cannot leap into the future without the springboard of our past. Nevertheless, hoping is a form of leaping, as well as a form of growing and expanding” (p. 130). Again, this speaks of new beginnings, for it is my hope that will continue to help me grow.

At the last meeting with my professors, I was reminded again of the dangers of certainty and generalizations. I must remember that I am working on my own practice. I have tried to develop my living educational theory by using action research with the *I* at the centre. Perhaps this is why the theory is still in progress. I was neither surprised nor disappointed when my professors pointed out new discrepancies and asked me for more clarification. McNiff (2000) says: “I can see slight improvement on an ongoing basis through my efforts; perfection, no” (p. 72). The more my assumptions are challenged, the greater the leap to a new understanding. It has become clear to me that I must continue on this route if I wish to unveil more contradictions in my discourse. It is easy to fall back on old conceptions and assume that what I have learned is now a static truth about teaching and leading. As my context changes, I may encounter new challenges for which answers will not be easy to come by. As I begin anew, I strive for a space where I can continue to find a voice in my stories and in those of the people around me. I embrace the uncertainty of the future, hoping that it will bring the good news of an education system for every child and for every teacher.

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Appendix

Ethics Approval

From: Deborah Van Oosten <deborah.vanoosten@brocku.ca>
To: sdrake@ed.BrockU.CA <sdrake@ed.BrockU.CA>; pauchulo@idirect.com
<pauchulo@idirect.com>
Cc: dbmarley@spartan.ac.BrockU.CA <dbmarley@spartan.ac.BrockU.CA>;
mowen@spartan.ac.BrockU.CA <mowen@spartan.ac.BrockU.CA>
Date: Tuesday, February 19, 2002 8:52 AM
Subject: REB 01-149, Pauchulo

Senate Research Ethics Board

Extensions 3205/3035, Room C315

FROM: David Butz, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Susan Drake, Education
Ana Lia Pauchulo

FILE: 01-149, Pauchulo

DATE: February 19, 2002

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the research proposal:

Facilitating Transformative Learning in Teachers

The Subcommittee finds that your proposal conforms to the Brock University guidelines set out for ethical research. Your research proposal has been approved through the expedited review process for the period of **February 19, 2002 to June 07, 2002**.

**** Accepted as clarified.**

Expedited Review of a research proposal (by 2 members of the Research Ethics Board and review by the Chair of the REB) is equivalent to approval provided by the full REB (i.e., it does not mean conditional approval). However, the Chair of the REB must report to the full REB on a monthly basis about any expedited reviews that they have conducted. At such meetings, the full REB could ask for additional changes to the research protocols being used in a particular study. If this were to occur, the decision of the full REB will always over-ride the earlier decision of the two REB members and the Chair.

Please note:

Changes or Modifications to this approved research must be reviewed and approved by the committee. Please complete form ***REB-03(2001)Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application to Conduct Research with Human Participants*** and submit it to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit ***REB-02 (2001) Continuing Review/Final Report*** annually and at the completion of the project. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this is required. All projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, will require this form to be submitted to the Research Ethics Board upon completion of the project.

These forms are available from the Office of Research Services web site:
www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html

DB/dvo

Deborah Van Oosten
Research Ethics Officer
Brock University <http://www.brocku.ca/researchservices/>
phone: (905)688-5550, ext. 3035 fax: (905)688-0748